*Number 80/Fall 2026*

# ELAN

*exlibris.ca*

Logo design: John Warrener

*Ex Libris Association Newsletter*

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## President's Report:

# Ex Libris Association Salutes Mary Simon

By David I. Harvie



**David Harvie, President of Ex Libris Association, attended a reception at Rideau Hall on May 29, 2026, honouring the achievements of Her Excellency Mary Simon as she ended her term of office as Governor General.**

**Photographer: MS Anne-Marie Brisson, Rideau Hall © OSGG, 2026.**



I had the honour to represent the ELA membership at a reception for outgoing Governor General Mary Simon on May 29th at Rideau Hall.

I was impressed with the quiet grace and confidence she brought to the office and was thrilled she agreed to be our association's vice-regal patron.

As retired librarians we recognize and value the importance of stories. There are no more important or powerful words than "Once upon a time …." As Mary Simon travelled across our vast country, she heard and shared many stories about what it meant to be Canadian. More importantly, she gave voice to stories that had no voice. It is the sharing of these untold stories that helped to heal, strengthen, inspire and bind us together as a nation.

On behalf of ELA, I conveyed our best wishes to Mary Simon and invited her to continue her association with us as we continue the work of helping Canadians tell their stories to each other and to the world.

***David I. Harvie** is a retired public librarian with a background in library automation, digital literacy and administration.* ▮

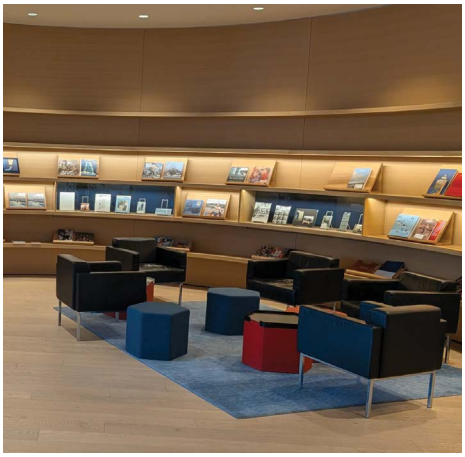
## Hold the Date

AGM March 16, 2027. Attend by Zoom!

# The Edward P. Taylor Library and Archives Tour – Behind the Scenes at the Art Gallery of Ontario

By Carmen Königsreuther Socknat

Friday May 1 was a chilly spring day, but our enthusiastic turnout of 16 Ex Librans was warmly met in the Art Gallery of Ontario foyer by Adrienne Connelly, access services librarian, who escorted us downstairs to the facilities named after the famed tycoon and former AGO president in the 1950s.



There we were met by her colleagues, Al Stanton-Hagan, AGO archivist, Claire Wright, cataloguing and technical services librarian, and Camille McDayter, acting special collections archivist, and were welcomed into the front reference area where the registration desk was along with the card catalogue, which was frozen in 1986 but is still being converted and the object of much nostalgia amongst the group.

We then moved into the Walter Carsen Reading Room, a spacious area with dark wooden shelving filled with reference books. Three tables of materials had been prepared for us – each highlighting an aspect of the library's collection mandate.

The first included institutional archival documents and photographs from the library's 1933 establishment in Grange House via a Carnegie Grant, through various moves and renovations to its current location. The archives also houses fonds of artists, collectors, dealers and other related businesses and institutions.



The second and third tables displayed a number of interesting livres d'artistes and items from the artists' book collection, as well as volumes from the rare book collection. One title in particular ***Pistol, Pistil: Botanical Ballistics*** by Anne E. Kalmbach was a limited edition work that explored the intersection of the vocabularies of war and nature and included dried mushroom and squash samples. A lively conversation on conservation issues ensued. In fact, the displays gave us a stimulating opportunity for questions and discussion, while demonstrating the broad range of book and non-book materials supporting research at the library.

Although heavily used by AGO curators researching exhibitions, the library is open for drop-in and by appointment. We were encouraged to return.

It was difficult to leave but we had a date with **Sin and Redemption**. This McCaul Street bistro was a great way to round off the morning. We left feeling totally uplifted.



Warm thanks to Vivienne James for continuing to pull these magical events out of her organizational bag of tricks. We don't know how you do it – but are so grateful that you do.

***Carmen Königsreuther Socknat*** *was head of Bibliographic Services at Victoria University, in University of Toronto, for many years.* ▮

A tour of the Ontario Legislative Library took place on October 14, 2026. A report will appear in *ELAN*, Spring 2027.

## Donate to ELA

A donation or bequest to ELA helps us increase our activities. All donations are tax deductible. Donate using CanadaHelps, e-transfer, or cheque to Bob Henderson (contact information on back cover.)

# W. Kaye Lamb Award for Service to Seniors, 2027

By Christina Wilson

ELA invites Canadian libraries to apply every other year for the **W. Kaye Lamb Award for Service to Seniors**. The award committee works with a variety of libraries and library associations to spotlight the exceptional services provided to seniors by our Canadian libraries. Every ELA member can play a role by informing your libraries about the award so they have time to prepare submissions.

All Canadian libraries – First Nations, post-secondary, public or special – are eligible. The list of past winners can be viewed on the **W. Kaye Lamb Award section of our website**.

In 2025, due to the large and varied number of submissions from libraries across Canada, ELA presented two awards.

Kingston Frontenac Public Library's *Older Adults Hub,* which operates out of the library's Rideau Heights Branch in an underserved neighbourhood, received the award to recognize the model developed to serve seniors there. Edmonton Public Library received an Honourable Mention for *Together We Grow*, an inter-generational, outreach program reaching seniors unable to visit library branches due to mobility, memory or other health issues, while nurturing positive relationships between generations. See our **website** and ***ELAN,* Spring 2026**, Page 3, for details of these awards.

The awards committee reviews each application to determine the winning recipient. Each award-winning library receives a cash prize, a commemorative certificate named after Canada's first national librarian and national acknowledgement of the library's accomplishment.

The application deadline is early November, 2027. We encourage members to suggest worthy programs by contacting the committee chair (**Christina Wilson**, **chriswilson@shaw.ca**) or directing applicants to the ELA website "Awards" section.

***Christina Wilson**, retired as CEO, Red Deer PL, has worked for public and post-secondary libraries in Ontario and Alberta. She is an ELA Board member.* ▮

# Canadian Federation of Library Associations/ Fédération Canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA-FCAB)

By Todd Kyle

With the end of Interim Executive Director Margaret Law's tenure, the CFLA-FCAB board appointed Christina de Castell as its next interim ED effective May 1. Christina is well known to many in the library world, having previously been a Vancouver Public Library CEO. She also has extensive experience in the association world, including IFLA, and has been working as a consultant on library governance and policy. Her goal in the next period is to continue to implement the recent governance review and stabilize the organization's operations.

CFLA-FCAB's focus for the near future is on strengthening relationships with federal government departments to influence the public policy environment in which libraries operate. It also intends to communicate with members to co-ordinate these efforts across library sectors. Beginning in May, regular policy updates to members are being produced, and the CFLA-FCAB National Forum was re-established at the OLA conference earlier this year.

In addition, CFLA-FCAB is continuing to refine its role and its operations starting with a financial review to keep the organization sustainable and effective. Members will consider related bylaw changes at the next AGM, which will be in early 2027 as the terms of executive roles on the board were lengthened in 2025.

Finally, CFLA-FCAB took a leadership role in supporting public libraries in Alberta and across the country in their fight against Bill 28. This bill will redefine the role of local public libraries and give the provincial minister the powers to make regulations including rules to limit minors' access to materials deemed sexually explicit. To support the effort to communicate the public library sector's concerns about the new law, CFLA-FCAB co-drafted templates for letters that could be sent from libraries and sector organizations outside Alberta during the Bill 28 process. This established a clearer co-ordination role for CFLA when local or provincial issues have potential national impact.

***Todd Kyle** is CEO, Brampton Public Library. He was CFLA-FCAB chair in 2021.* ▮

EX LIBRIS HAS A BRAND NEW WEBSITE

https://exlibris.ca

- powered by WordPress
- easier mobile access
- improved navigation
- easier searching



# Advocacy: What I Have Learned

By Ken Haycock

After more than 50 years as an advocate, a trainer of advocates and a researcher of what actually works, I've come to a five-word conclusion: **the relationship is the message.** It holds in every sector — school, public, academic, corporate — and in every setting, whether I'm working with a colleague, a dean, a provost or a legislator.

**Much of what we believe about advocacy simply isn't true. We confuse it with marketing, lobbying, publicity and public relations.** We make threats and predict dire consequences that never materialize. We stage "leg days" and mistake noise for a campaign. And we evaluate the wrong things — how good the effort felt rather than whether it changed a decision.

I define advocacy as the planned, deliberate and sustained effort to develop understanding and support incrementally over time. Three lessons follow.

- First, advocacy is about respect: the decision-maker holds the power and the purse strings, and embarrassing them never helps.
- Second, advocacy is like banking — you make deposits of understanding and trust before you make withdrawals.
- Third, people do things for their reasons, not ours, so I need to know a decision-maker's values, context and priorities.

**The research on influence bears this out, and there is so much evidence of success, from arts boards to school library coalitions.** Decision-makers respond when they believe you genuinely like them, when there is reciprocity, when you have credibility and when you align with their beliefs and priorities. Often someone else — a faculty member, another dean, a respected colleague — carries more authority than I do, and I should encourage them to speak.

We also undersell ourselves. We are not "free;" we are a worthy investment. We should step out of the crowded information sandbox and articulate our unique value in community development, research and learning.

**So: plan strategically, assign responsibility, monitor, stay positive and, above all, invest in relationships.** They pay off in support.

If nothing else, you will have a receptive audience and someone in a position to act on your issue.

With thanks to fellow travellers, specifically Margaret Andrewes, Pat Cavill, Wendy Newman and Cheryl Stenstrom.

This short piece is adapted from "Advocacy and Influence: What We Know After Fifty Years of Training and Research: An Interview with Dr. Ken Haycock." Chapter 13, pp. 155 to 164, in **Legislative Advocacy and Public Policy Work for Academic and Research Library Workers: Perspectives and Strategies** (ACRL, 2025).

*Ken Haycock is executive director of Better Boards. Better Communities. Dr. Haycock is professor emeritus at UBC and San Jose State University. The recipient of many awards and honours, he is the founder of Project LLEAD. His free weekly insights into board governance are available at Governance as Leadership.* ∎

## Write for *ELAN*

The newsletter committee welcomes members' submissions. We accept articles, news items and ideas of interest to members, including your memoirs of early days or important figures in librarianship, library history, your own career and your current activities in the field. We especially welcome contributions to our regular feature, "Why I Became a Librarian." For submission information, see the back cover.

## New Members

*We're proud to welcome these new members:*

Chana Algarvio, Brampton, ON
Sophie Andrade, Toronto, ON
Lita Barrie, Burlington, ON
Lesley Bell, St. Catharines, ON
Laura Carter, Kingston, ON
Kathryn Drury, Hamilton, ON
Silvia Elicagaray, The Blue Mountains, ON
Joanna Griffith, Port Elgin, ON
Kate Johnson, Toronto, ON
Margaret Law, Edmonton, AB
Courtney Lundrigan, Victoria, BC
Joy Muller, Toronto, ON
Jennifer Richard, Wolfville, NS
Lauren Rupert, Whitby, ON
Toni Samek, St. Albert, AB
Fiona Smith, Toronto, ON
Sheila Woodgold, Ottawa, ON

# Technology Unmasked: Slop!

By Stan Orlov



"Slop" is the flood of low-quality content produced with generative artificial intelligence (AI). Anyone can generate, illustrate and publish a book in a fraction of the time required — and release dozens of titles under invented author or publisher names. Some of these books are merely awkward or nonsensical. Others can be dangerous, such as AI-generated mushroom-foraging guides containing potentially deadly misinformation, children's books with distorted illustrations and nonfiction books that imitate legitimate publications.

Unfortunately, AI slop does not always advertise itself. Librarians normally rely on vendors, reviews, publisher information and catalogue records; they rarely have time to read every book before ordering it. In a February 2026 ACRLog conversation, "**I Bought Slop**," four Salisbury University librarians describe accidentally purchasing an apparent AI-generated student health guide promoted on a GOBI spotlight list. It had no citations, almost no reviews and poor illustrations. Warning signs include an author with almost no online presence but dozens of recently published books, repetitive writing, missing references, inconsistent illustrations, few library holdings and unverifiable publisher credentials. None proves that AI was used. AI-detection programs remain unreliable.

In July, the American Library Association recommended that collection policies address AI-generated and AI-assisted materials, considering quality, disclosure, creator labour, research integrity, metadata and patron transparency. The problem is not every use of AI. Libraries need clear vendor metadata, useful previews, effective filters and reasonable return options to separate valuable information from material that does not deserve their money — or their patrons' trust.

Further reading on this topic:

**How Local Librarians Keep AI Slop Off the Shelves**

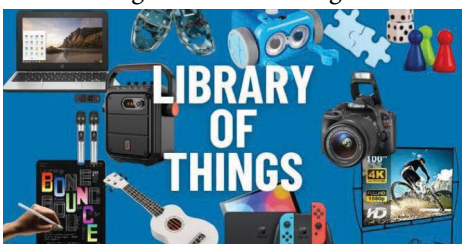
**ALA Guidance on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Libraries**

***Stanislav Orlov*** *is systems librarian at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax.* ▮

# Unusual Formats: Unreadable Books, Large and Small

By Leslie McGrath

Libraries of Things (LOT), formerly "realia," have never been more popular, but librarians object to circulating non-book holdings.




**Courtesy Blue Mountain Libraries, Ontario.**

Among the most complained-about items are computers and hotspots, fishing poles that need repairs after every circulation, portable barbeque grills and bicycles "stored right in the staff work area!" (Reddit, "How do you handle").

Toys can be a problem, especially dolls — "I'm in charge of their upkeep for my branch so that means brushing their hair and hand-washing their little bloomers …" — and stuffed animals, which "look mangey after a few uses … a health risk in this day and age." (ibid)

One librarian objects to "counting 1000-piece puzzles, comparing instruction sheet lists to what the board game actually has in it, washing the blender or ice cream maker because it was returned dirty, same with the gardening equipment. It's a great idea ... But I hate it with a passion as an employee." (ibid)

Helpful solutions offered on Reddit include barcoding each gadget's component, with replacement or cleaning costs posted for each, and limiting high-demand item borrowing to "family" rather than "individual" use.

Yet despite problems, LOTs circulate well because they offer a chance to try things out without a major commitment: musical instruments; hobbies; DIY projects; and so on … all posted online, many in colourful catalogues.

One item in great demand: Ghost Detection kits. According to Jessie Pepin, a librarian at Cochrane Public Library, Alberta, theirs is "… **a perennially popular item**. It has had a hold list for years …" (Pepin) Its appeal might partly be inspired by their lively **YouTube video** demonstrating the use of the kit: library detectives corner a ghost brandishing an outsize Overdue stamp, to the accompaniment of Bach's *Toccata and Fugue in D minor*.

Another LOT patron reported how helpful their ghost hunting kit was: "I used it and everything was OK. Except one reading in the bathroom which I later mentioned to [my wife] … for the past five years she's been convinced our house [is] haunted and I tell her, 'no, just the bathroom'." (Reddit, "Mildly interesting comments")




**Courtesy of Cochrane Public Library, Alberta**

***Leslie McGrath*** *worked at TPL as a children's librarian and a branch head for 10 years and senior department head of the Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books for 23 years.* ▮

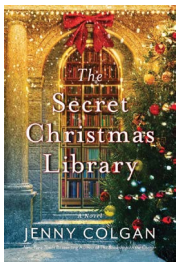
**References**

Pepin, Jessie, email to Leslie McGrath, June 18, 2026.
Reddit, **"How Do you Handle These Concerns?"**
Reddit, **"Mildly interesting comments"**



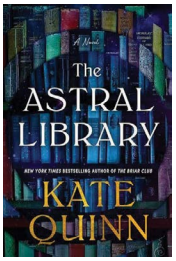
# Good Reads

By Judy Dunn



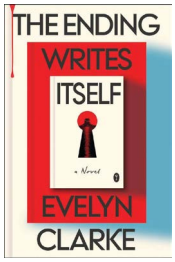

***The Secret Christmas Library***
**By Jenny Colgan**
**William Morrow Paperbacks, 2025**

Follows antiquarian book hunter Mirren Sutherland as she's hired by laird Jamie McPherson to find a priceless, hidden book that could save his crumbling ancestral estate in the Scottish Highlands.




***The Astral Library***
**By Kate Quinn**
**William Morrow, 2026**

A fantastical adventure novel described as a love letter to books and libraries. Serves as an exploration of the importance of libraries as safe sanctuaries while also tackling themes of book-banning, censorship and the power of literature.



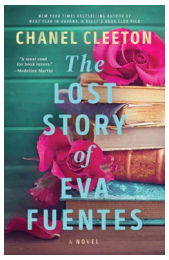

***The Ending Writes Itself***
**By Evelyn Clarke**
**Harper, 2026**

A "locked-room" thriller where six authors are lured to a Scottish island to compete for $1 million by finishing a dead author's final manuscript. A collaboration of two known authors, V.E. Schwab and Cat Clarke.



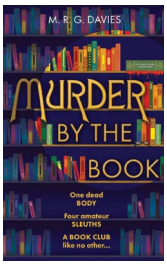

***The Last Page Cafe***
**By Kate Storey**
**HarperCollins, 2026**

The plot centres on a unique book club that selects books based solely on reading the last page first — a metaphor for seeking control over uncertain futures.




***The Lost Story of Eva Fuentes***
**By Chanel Clayton**
**Penguin Random House, 2025**

A murder mystery/romance that incorporates the intertwined lives of three different women over three time periods. Cuba's political history serves as a backdrop.




***Murder by the Book***
**By M.R.G. Davies**
**HarperCollins, 2026**

A cozy mystery about four members of a murder-mystery reading group at The Quaint Bookshop in the English town of Norchester. The story ends with the reading group uncovering the killer through a mix of literary clues and careful deduction.

***Judy Dunn*** *retired in 2011 after six years as assistant dean academic, Faculty of Information, UofT and 15 years as program co-ordinator, School of Information Management, Dalhousie University.*

*Find a compilation of Good Reads on the* ***ELA website****.* ▮

# Book Reviews

Edited by Sally Press




***Bibliothèques et archives dans les communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire : enjeux et devenir***
**Editorial Committee: Alain Roy, Lucie Hotte, Hélène Carrier, & Linda Savoie**
**Ottawa, Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 2025**

Reviewed by Peter McNally

This collection of essays focuses on issues, opportunities and challenges faced by archives and libraries dealing with official language minorities, with particular attention paid to collections and services. Attention is also paid to "… the role of memory and heritage in ensuring the vitality of an official language in a minority situation." [Page 2, reviewer translation]

The seven essays, plus introduction and conclusion, are the outcome of a 2021 national conference held under the auspices of Library and Archives Canada, the University of Ottawa and l'Association des bibliothèques de l'Ontario-Franco. Well-known experts and professionals were associated with the conference, including Raymond Théberge, Canada's Commissioner of Official Languages (2018 to 2026).

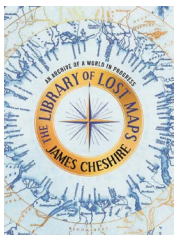
Given that Canada is officially a bilingual country with English and French having equal status at the federal level, the conference and resulting publication are long overdue. Not surprisingly, the Francophone concerns of Manitoba, New Brunswick and Ontario receive major attention. The Quebec chapter, translated from English to French, focuses largely on an archival project dealing with "grey" literature. One chapter, looking at public libraries in six bilingual European jurisdictions – Belgium, Croatia, Finland, Ireland, Norway and Wales – provides helpful context.

This important contribution to understanding the linguistic context of Canadian libraries and archives is profusely footnoted. Written by experts for experts, the essays provide important information and insights that will benefit professionals and others. An English-language edition might prove helpful. The volume includes some tables but neither illustrations nor an index.

***Peter McNally*** *is professor emeritus at McGill University, School of Information Studies.* ▮

*Continued on page 7*

Continued from page 6




***The Library of Lost Maps: An Archive of a World in Progress***
**By James Cheshire**
**Bloomsbury, 2025**

Reviewed by Leslie McGrath

James Cheshire, professor of geographic information and cartography, cartographer and author (*Atlas of the Invisible*, Globe Award winner), writes on various themes of cartographic exploration — political, historic and scientific — engaging his audience, academic and general, throughout.

Taking examples from the University College London map library — which he calls "Aladdin's cave of cartographic treasures" — Cheshire explores the growing power of maps and how their role in illustrating flora and fauna, mineral and geological features expand the holistic view of the universe inspired by Humboldt's scientific exploration.

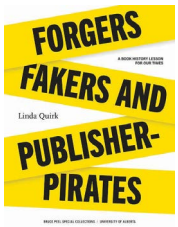
He illustrates the increasing sophistication of maps and how their application in broad educational initiatives led to their use as propaganda and warfare tools, often with tragic results: during World War I detailed maps on which orders were based often bore no resemblance to the featureless morasses in which ill-conceived battles were fought; before and after maps of Hiroshima show the devestation the atomic age made possible. Cheshire's examination of the use and abuse of ethnographic maps by the victors deciding post-war borders is particularly relevant, immersed as we are in modern conflicts based on historic colonial claims and on the practice of states funding maps with borders drawn to order.

Through contemporary references, Cheshire connects the historical dots: for example, Putin's soldiers carrying maps with Soviet-era boundaries.

The author takes a refreshing look at the maps' creators, including Marie Tharp and Bruce Heezen who mapped the ocean floors. He celebrates the librarians who make map collections come alive. Though Cheshire laments the loss of map libraries and the prioritization of "analytical sophistication over cartographic beauty" by Roger Tomlinson, the Canadian who instigated map digitization (viz., CGIS), and others, he reminds us that new, powerful technologies give us the information needed to take action on climate change, conservation and other urgent problems.

Yet printed maps remain the focus of this handsome and well-designed book. Its most striking visual feature is colourful map reproduction throughout, with a reference Map Gallery of miniatures to illustrate all the maps in their entirety. There is a subject index, but text references are available only online in a readily accessible file.

Highly recommended. ▮




***Forgers, Fakers, and Publisher-Pirates***
**By Linda Quirk**
**Bruce Peel Special Collections, University of Alberta, 2025**

Reviewed by Kelly Moore

*Forgers, Fakers, and Publisher-Pirates* is a catalogue of an exhibition recently held at the University of Alberta. Quirk's engaging introduction sets parameters for the exhibition entries and stories that follow by defining what constitutes forgeries, fakes, and piracy, and placing these terms in the context of today's world of digital information and misinformation.

The "stories" section provides an entertaining journey through the darker side of print culture. The first part includes examples of both forgeries, such as the poems of Ossian and *The Castle of Otranto*, and notorious forgers including William Henry Ireland and the infamous duo of Harry Buxton Foreman and Thomas J. Wise.

The catalogue highlights subjects for which BPSC has significant holdings and includes, for example, several pages devoted to the "faker," Winnifred Eaton, who penned several best-selling books under the assumed Japanese pseudonym Onoto Watanna. There is also a discussion of "pretendians," such as Archie Belaney (who was known as Grey Owl).

The section on publisher-pirates has stories on the impact of pirated editions on well-known Canadians, such as Susanna Moodie, Sam Steele, E. Pauline Johnson, as well as the British gothic novelist Anne Radcliffe. Given the extent of publishing piracy in North America in the nineteenth century, one might have expected to see a few more examples included here. A concluding section looks at facsimiles, or what Quirk terms "authorized fakes," again allowing her to draw attention to BPSC holdings of interest, including reproductions of the Book of Kells and the Voynitch manuscript.

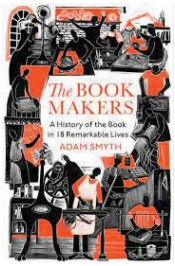
As one would expect, the catalogue is lavishly illustrated with title pages and bindings, mainly drawn from the BPSC collections. However, stories about forgers accompanied by images of texts that are not themselves forgeries, and a page dedicated to the American Mark Landis, whose forgeries were art works rather than books or documents, seemed incongruous to the rest of the entries. But these issues aside, the book provides an engaging look at a realm of activity that has long captured bibliophile interest and makes the topic accessible even to readers with little knowledge of the book trade.

***Kelly Moore** is the principal consultant at Red Kayak and operates Kelly Moore Bookbinding. She has a long history of working with both national and international library associations.* ▮

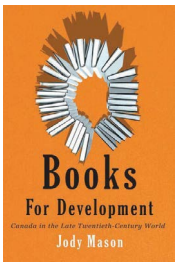
## *ELAN* in Electronic Format

For members who wish to receive future ELAN issues in an electronic format, please contact Bob Henderson (contact information on the back cover).

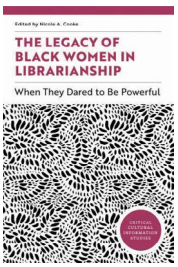
## Other Books of Interest



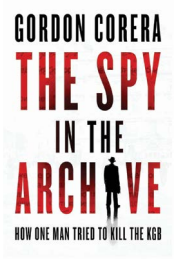

***The Book-Makers: A History of the Book in Eighteen Remarkable Lives***
**By Adam Smyth**
**Basic Books, 2024**




***Books for Development: Canada in the Late Twentieth-Century World; How the book came to function as a key representative of Canadian settler exceptionalism***
**By Jody Mason**
**McGill-Queen's University Press, 2026 (Recommended by Peter McNally.)**

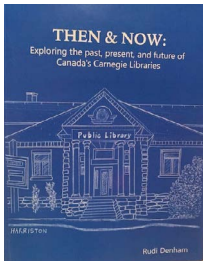



***The Legacy of Black Women in Librarianship: When They Dared to Be Powerful***
**Nicole A. Cooke, ed.**
**ALA Neal-Schuman, 2025**




***The Spy in the Archive: How One Man Tried to Kill the KGB***
**By Gordon Corera**
**Pegasus Books, 2026 (Recommended by Judy Dunn.)**

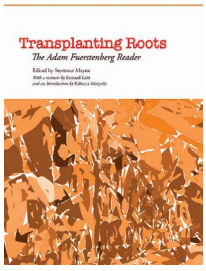
## Publications by Members




***Carnegie Libraries***
**By Rudi Denham**
**Self-published, 2026**




**"Advocacy and influence: What we know after 50 years of training and research: An interview with Ken Haycock," in *Legislative Advocacy and Public Policy Work for Academic and Research Library Workers: Perspectives and Strategies***
**Edited by R. Pun, S. M. Durney, & T. Anantachai**
**Association of College and Research Libraries, 2025, p. 155-164**




**"Adam Gabriel Fuerstenberg (z"l): scholar, teacher, colleague, friend – a mentsch for all seasons," by Bernard Katz, in *Transplanting Roots: The Adam Fuerstenberg Reader***
**Edited by Seymour Mayne**
**Ronald P. Frye & Co., 2025, p. 9-16**

## Membership Notes

**Let's Stay in Touch!**
Help us keep our email listserv current. If you or someone you know is not receiving our emails, send us the correct email address.

**When You Move**
Please remember to send us your new address and other changed contact information.

**Potential new members!**
If you know people who might be interested in becoming ELA members, please send us their names and contact information.

**Membership dues.**
Please submit any outstanding dues.

**Send information for the above directly to Bob Henderson, Treasurer and Membership Secretary (contact information on the back cover.)**

## Publications by Members

*ELAN* welcomes news about members' publications. Send a brief description or an advertising brochure.
For submission information, see the back cover.

**This article is the fourth in a series of histories of Canadian special libraries. Series editor, Suzette Giles.**

# A History of Federal Government Libraries in Canada, Part 2

By Ross Gordon

The recent history of federal government libraries in Canada reflects a narrative of adaptation to technological change, fiscal constraint and shifting policy priorities. From the co-ordinated optimism of the 1970s to the disruptions of the digital age and the harsh austerity measures of the 2010s, federal libraries have continually evolved.

As mentioned in Part 1 (*ELAN #79, Spring 2026*) the modern era of federal library co-operation began with the establishment of the **Council of Federal Libraries** (CFL) in 1976. Created to improve the use of federal library resources, CFL advised the National Librarian and fostered co-ordination and professional development across departments. Through committees focused on cataloguing, preservation, systems and electronic resources, CFL helped standardize practices and improve service delivery across hundreds of federal libraries.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, federal libraries operated within a hybrid model of formal structures and informal collaboration. Departments maintained centralized library systems, but librarians increasingly relied on interdepartmental co-operation to enhance services.

By the mid-1990s, rapid technological change disrupted traditional library models. The rise of the internet, electronic databases (I.e., Dialog), and CD-ROM-based systems created uncertainty about the future of libraries. While librarians advocated for investment in digital resources, some senior managers questioned the continued relevance of library services.

In response, in 1995, CFL established the CFL Consortium to leverage collective purchasing power. The consortium negotiated group agreements for electronic resources enabling cost savings and broader access. It also advanced the concept of a "virtual library," reducing duplication and improving procurement efficiency.

In July 1996, the consortium produced the *Vision 2001* framework, outlining ambitions for expanded membership, stronger government influence and enhanced collaboration with other consortia. It also identified key risks, including technological change and budget pressures. This vision was implemented during the late 1990s and early 2000s.

In 2004, coinciding with the creation of Library and Archives Canada out of the old National Library and National Archives, the consortium looked to redefine its future. One key development was the introduction of "clustering," whereby libraries with similar mandates collaborated more closely, sharing expertise and reducing duplication.

A *Proof of Concept* paper proposed a shared intranet platform to provide access to full-text resources and catalogues across government. At the same time, a comprehensive needs assessment highlighted the need for clearer strategic direction, stronger partnerships and sustained funding.

Despite these efforts, CFL itself was disbanded in September 2007, marking the end of a formal era of centralized co-ordination in federal library governance. Nonetheless, the collaborative practices and procurement models it established continued to influence federal library operations.

Beginning in 2007 to 2008 and intensifying after 2012, federal libraries faced significant reductions driven by cost-cutting measures and a policy emphasis on digitization. Facing large deficits, the Harper government made cuts across the board and libraries fell as a result.

This period marked a nadir for federal libraries. The assumption that digital access could replace physical collections led to widespread closures, staff reductions and the dismantling of collections. Library closures were frequently rapid and poorly co-ordinated. Entire collections were de-accessioned, often without comprehensive assessment, with reports of lost materials and reduced access to critical information resources. Departments such as Fisheries and Oceans, Health Canada and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada experienced significant disruptions. Digitization efforts often proved incomplete due to copyright and technical limitations.

The consequences were profound. Researchers increasingly relied on external providers, often at higher cost, while the capacity for evidence-based decision-making within government departments was weakened.

In response to these challenges, the federal library community mobilized. Librarians organized meetings, developed advocacy materials and articulated the value of library services to government operations.

CFL and its consortium no longer exist, but they demonstrated the effectiveness of collaboration, collective procurement and professional networking in sustaining library services through periods of change. Now the ***Federal Science Libraries Network*** provides an excellent shared service for seven science departments. And the ***Canadian Federal Libraries Strategic Network*** *(CFLSN)* carries on the work of bringing federal libraries together to share good practices and face pressure from outside forces.

More broadly, the history of federal government libraries illustrates a pattern of resilience. Faced with technological disruption and fiscal pressures, librarians adapted by redefining their roles and embracing new models of service delivery.

Today, federal libraries remain essential components of the government's information infrastructure — dynamic institutions that support research, inform decision-making and preserve Canada's intellectual heritage.

Their experience underscores a central lesson: while technologies, structures and budgets may change, the need for organized, accessible and professionally managed information remains constant. Federal libraries, in this sense, are not relics of the past, but vital instruments for navigating the complexities of the present and future.

***Ross Gordon*** *was Director of Information Management at Environment and Climate Change Canada prior to retirement and now does historical research.* ▮

**References**

Bid, Donald W., Goodman Julia. *Librarians and Library Services: Strategic Business and Service Enablers Within the Information Management Environment.* [Ottawa]: Council of Federal Libraries, 2003.

Gordon, Ross, Howarth, Lynne, Wallace, Deborah. *Building a Foundation for Moving Forward: Report of Needs Assessment Findings.* [Ottawa]: Council of Federal Libraries, Consortium, 2004.

Harriet2. ***The Closure of Canadian Government Libraries, Archives and Research Collections.*** January 28, 2014.

***Nature's Past Episode on the Closing of Federal Libraries.*** February 7, 2014.

***Farewell from the Council of Federal Libraries Planning & Priorities Committee.*** October 29, 2007.

***Federal Libraries, Archives Shutting Down. Researchers, Academics, Genealogists Losing Important Research Tools for Their Work.*** **CBC News.** May 2, 2012.

# Peter Julian: Mis/disinformation, Its Toxic Impacts and How to Fight Back

By Julia Schneider

Peter Julian's June 10 ELA webinar on mis/disinformation gave a succinct overview of its dissemination, negative impacts and ways to combat it to members of ELA and a B.C.-based audience of library workers.



As a former long-time B.C. MP and current political commentator, Julian is very involved in this topic. His talk succinctly summarized the insidiousness and toxic effects of this growing threat, with its trifecta of disinformation:

1. Social media platforms that face no legal accountability or consequences for what they present, lobby government to stay that way and reap massive profits as a result;
2. Algorithms carefully designed to force-feed disinformation to targeted audiences;
3. Troll farms that produce and send disinformation with the express aim of influencing political outcomes (think Russia, India and other countries).

The toxic effects of the above are all around us. Mental health problems, especially in children, wide-spread scams of all kinds, the explosion of violence, misogyny and transphobia from white supremacist and other fringe groups and the end of civic and civil engagement. Julian views Trump's election, Brexit and the push for Alberta's referendum on separation as results in the political sphere.

How does Julian recommend we fight these?

- Follow the Finns. With Russia so close, they have put in place protections against its encroachments, including education from teachers and librarians on recognizing disinformation in the schools, starting at an early age. Librarians are a fundamental part of this education.
- Emulate the Europeans. Europe is far ahead of us, Julian said, in its stringent regulations against disseminating hate and disinformation, with fines of $120 million and more for those responsible. Not only does Canada not have such regulations and fines, he added, but it is going backward by removing Canadian content requirements in digital services.
- Use reliable media sources. Julian cited the CBC as a good example of one that strives to present different viewpoints fairly.
- Talk about the problem. It is not going to go away, and AI will likely make it much worse. People need to speak out.

To watch this Webinar, go to the **ELA website**.

***Julia Schneider** has worked in school and prison libraries as well as classrooms around the world. She is an ELA board member.* ▮

# ELA Webinars

By Deb Thomas, Chair, Education Committee

ELA continues to offer two or three webinars a year on topics of interest to members.

On Wednesday, June 10, former MP Peter Julian presented *Mis/Disinformation, its toxic impacts, and how we can all fight back* to a turnout of both ELA members and working librarians. See review above.

On September 29, Ken Haycock presented a webinar on Advocacy That Works: Build the Relationships Before You Need Them. It will be reported in full in the Spring 2027 *ELAN* issue. If you missed the webinar and are interested in the topic, watch for a notice on the ELA list that the recording has been posted on our website **Presentations** page.

Suggestions for speakers or topics are always welcome.

***Deb Thomas** recently retired from a 40+ year career in libraries, 30 years of which were in public library management. She is an ELA board member.* ▮

## Gift an ELA Membership

Members can invite someone to become a new member and gift a one-year membership by making a $10 tax-deductible donation in the person's name. You can use this donation/gift option as often as you like.
Donate using CanadaHelps, e-transfer or cheque to Bob Henderson (contact information on the back cover).

# Accessible Reading in Canada

By Ralph Manning

Reading the daily newspaper, relaxing with a good novel, researching for a term paper — all activities most of us take for granted. Yet more than one in 10 Canadians cannot do these things because of a print disability.

*Fulfilling the Promise, Report of the Task Force on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians* was a landmark report published jointly in October 2000 by the National Library of Canada and CNIB. Its goal was to establish a framework for public policy in addressing Canadians with print disabilities' need for access to print materials. Following this report's publication, the National Libarian established the Council on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians, with a mandate to implement the findings of the report. The Council deliberated for 10 years before being disbanded.

Library and Archives Canada established the Initiative for Equitable Library Access (IELA) in 2007. LAC was allocated $3 million for IELA, with the goal of creating a national network which would include a central agency to co-ordinate the network, service providers to produce accessible material and most importantly, the existing national network of public libraries. In 2010 IELA was abruptly discontinued, having achieved only part of its objective, and LAC returned the remaining funds as it had decided not to continue its involvement. This meant there was no longer a lead government agency supporting the availability of alternative formats for people with print disabilities. This disappointing decision was not unnoticed by the **Expert Panel of the Royal Society of Canada on the Future of Canadian Libraries**.

The work undertaken by LAC had been in close collaboration with CNIB and when LAC withdrew, CNIB continued to work diligently on the file. For many years, CNIB had been producing alternative formats, but its mandate limited the scope of its clientele to persons who were visually impaired. Their services were therefore not accessible to people with mobility impairments — unable to hold or manipulate a book — or those with perceptual disabilities such as dyslexia. Moreover, advocates for the blind believed they deserved to be treated like everyone else, not as a special community — they believed since the community at large benefited from a massive network of public libraries in Canada, they should have the same benefits. This sentiment was expressed eloquently by James Sanders, president of CNIB, in his remarks to the inaugural meeting of the Council on Access when he said that he had a "dream to walk into my local public library, register as a client, know what was available, determine how to receive it, make the selection and have access to the services of my library."

Recognizing that equitable access to information for people with print disabilities was a basic human right, not a charity, CNIB determined it should no longer be involved in the production of alternative formats and the provision of library services. In 2012, CNIB outlined a vision for a central agency that would provide public library services to all Canadians with print disabilities (*Reading Re-Imagined: A National Digital HUB to Support Service Delivery to Canadians with Print Disabilities*. CNIB, 2012.) In collaboration with CLA and particularly with the Canadian Urban Libraries Council, CNIB began to transition its library services to a new entity to be known as the Centre for Equitable Library Access/Centre d'accès équitable aux bibliothèques (CELA/CAÉB). In 2013, **CELA** was incorporated as a federal not-for-profit organization.

CNIB phased out its direct involvement, and CELA assumed responsibility for CNIB collections and production infrastructure. CELA's funding comes through grants from the federal government and provincial governments as well as significant support from public libraries which became the primary focus for provision of service to people with print disabilities.

At about the same time as the emergence of CELA, another national initiative for the provision of alternate formats for Canadians with print disabilities was created: the **National Network of Equitable Library Service** (NNELS). Using the technology infrastructure of the British Columbia Libraries Co-operative, NNELS provides access to alternative formats for people with print disabilities. Public libraries are the primary service providers.

The Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec also provides access in Quebec to alternative materials through its **Service québécois du livre adapté** (SQLA).

Much progress has been made over the last few years. CELA, NNELS and SQLA work closely to ensure Canadians with print disabilities have the greatest possible access to alternative materials in the formats they need. While focused on Canadian materials, foreign material is accessed through co-operation with organizations such as the **Accessible Books Consortium**. Born accessible content — accessible material produced at source — continues to increase.

The dream expressed by James Sanders in 2001 is coming to realization — public libraries across Canada are now increasingly able to provide equitable access to people with print disabilities. The huge difficulty, however, is the underlying cost of producing material and the development of new technologies. Since LAC declined to take on the role, no federal government department has the lead in providing funding for accessible reading services. CELA and NNELS do receive federal funding through government grants, but it is neither sufficient nor permanent so, unlike peer countries, Canada lacks stable federal support for accessible library services.

***Ralph Manning*** *worked for LAC more than 30 years, retiring in 2009 as acting director, strategic policy. He was in charge of the secretariat of the Council on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians, manager of the IELA and a founding board member of CELA.* ▮

# How and Why I Became a Librarian

By Ashley Thomson

Several years ago, I was asked by the president of Laurentian University's history club to give a talk on what history grads could do with a four-year degree. I told them they could go on to graduate work in history or become teachers or journalists or lawyers or even librarians – because I had considered each of those options.

When I was young, being a librarian was the farthest thing from my mind. True, as a little kid, my dad often took me to the library to pick up non-fiction books in the children's section. But for most of my youth, I envisaged becoming a high school teacher, just like my dad, and later decided to make history my teachable at university.

When I attended the University of Toronto, a friend of mine suggested we both attend McMaster University to get our MAs, so in 1968 off we went. My friend was by then happily married, and I was all alone — so when he encouraged me to apply for the doctoral program, I honestly didn't think I could spend another four years stuck in libraries and archives … so, in 1970, off I went to teacher's college, back in Toronto, on the path to my original dream of becoming a history teacher.

Unfortunately, I didn't like practice teaching. I am not physically imposing, and on top of that I looked young — so to be honest, I wasn't a very effective classroom disciplinarian. Providentially, my B.Ed. minor was in school libraries, and upon graduation I decided to enrich my credentials by getting a master's degree in library science. The program would take two years and by the end of it, I figured I would not only be extremely well qualified for the job as a high school teacher/librarian, but I would have physically matured enough to be more credible in the classroom.

At graduation, that plan was postponed thanks to a scholarship that required me to commit to at least two-years at the University of Saskatchewan library. Because they needed an assistant to the law school librarian, I landed up there. While I enjoyed the students, what I didn't enjoy was the way I was treated. Every Friday afternoon the head librarian gave me a written list of instructions for the coming week … and he also made it very clear that as his assistant, I, not he, would deal with the faculty.

Over the course of the year, it became clear that librarianship was not for me. At teacher's college, the school library course drilled into me that school librarians were also teachers, the equal of other faculty. My lived experience in the law library did not reflect that. So, I decided that I would attend law school. After passing the LSAT, I was accepted at Queen's University. To make a short story even shorter, part of law school's orientation program included a library tour, and at the end of it, I concluded that my problem was not with libraries but with the University of Saskatchewan law librarian. When I contacted that university to see if I could come back, they agreed, especially since I still had a year left on my scholarship contract.

This time, I was placed back in the main library with Miss Ruth Murray, a wonderful boss who headed the Instruction and Information Unit. My job was to help with tours and promote the library. While I liked the instruction part, I really got into the information part. I remember setting up a library newsletter and cooking up stories about the library that I got into the *Star Phoenix* as well as on the local CTV news.

The problem was the summer when there was not much to do. To kill time, I wanted to do a bibliography to help students, but I was told by the head of reference that that was the job of her department so I couldn't. Instead, I spent my time at the Information Desk reading magazines, waiting for someone to help. In my off hours, I started working for the campus newspaper and radio station. In fact, I liked journalism so much that I decided to ditch librarianship and enter Carleton's journalism school. Good times, until I went on another library tour and finally concluded that my problem wasn't libraries but the University of Saskatchewan.

I could hardly ask to go back, so what was I to do? Back in Sudbury I noticed that Laurentian had a job as a reference librarian which was still open. Since no one else wanted the job, it was mine … and I never left for 46 years.

Why did I love being a librarian at Laurentian? Answer: there I could indulge all my other interests. I worked with historians to publish history books and with the faculty association to negotiate faculty status for librarians. Over the years, I also helped negotiate lots of other improvements to faculty working conditions, reflecting my passion for labour law. In the library, I wrote a question/answer column, "The Amiable Librarian," for the student newspaper. I also established and edited the faculty association's newsletter. Finally, in my "real" job, I taught hundreds of students both from university and from area high schools without any discipline problem.

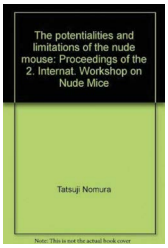
For more of my career at Laurentian see a profile article on the **local news site**. ▮

# Memorably Odd Titles

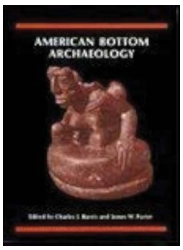
By Leslie McGrath

**The Bookseller/Diagram Prize**, also known as the **Diagram Prize**, is a literary award for the oddest title at the annual Frankfort Book Fair, presented following a vote on ***The Bookseller*** website.

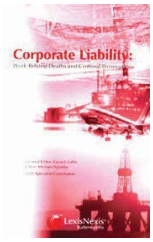
Previous winners include:




*Proceedings of the Second International Workshop on Nude Mice* (a medical study published by Tokyo University, 1978);

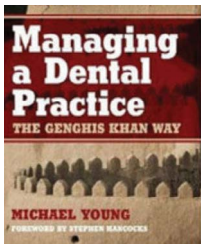



*American Bottom Archaeology* (a study of the Mississippi River, University of Illinois Press, 1993);



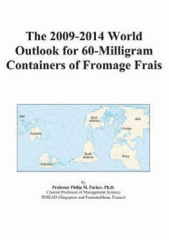

*Butterworths Corporate Manslaughter Service* (a legal work on corporate liability published by Butterworths, 2001);

*Managing a Dental Practice: The Genghis Khan Way* (self-help for dentists, Radcliff Press, 2020).




And in praise of niche books:

*The 2009 to 2014 World Outlook for 60-Milligram Containers of Fromage Frais* (computer-generated for the Icon Group, 2008).




Most recent winner:




*The Pornographic Delicatessen: Midcentury Montréal's Erotic Art, Media and Space.* (Concordia University, 2025). ▮

## Awards to Members

**Larry P. Alford**, University Chief Librarian at the University of Toronto until August 31, 2026, received two Lifetime Achievement Awards in 2026. The Ontario College and University Library Association **recognized him** for his leadership in expanding the **Borealis Dataverse** into a national shared service supporting digital research across Canada. His support of open access partnerships that have reduced barriers to scholarship was also recognized. The **Ontario Council of University Libraries** recognized his "distinguished career characterized by leadership, collaboration and transformative contributions to the research library community."

**Vickery Bowles** received the **2026 Ken Haycock Award for Promoting Librarianship** at the Ontario Library Association Super Conference Gala on January 29, 2026. "Vickery has been a clear, courageous voice for the core values that define public libraries, especially intellectual freedom …" Vickery served as city librarian at Toronto Public Library for 10 years, prior to her retirement in September 2025.

**Christine Middlemass** received a 2026 British Columbia Library Association **Honorary Life Membership** for "substantial and recognizable long-standing contributions to BCLA and to library service in the province." She was BCLA president (2019 to 2021). She spent most of her library career at Vancouver Public Library, ending as manager of collections and technical services. She came out of retirement to serve as BC Library Trustees Association's interim executive director.

**Toni Samek** was recognized with the 2026 **CFLA-FCAB Intellectual Freedom Award**, for her commitment to making intellectual freedom a part of the education of new librarians. She has a significant number of publications detailing the history of intellectual freedom in North America and the relationships between intellectual freedom and social justice, library and information service education and ethical questions related to intellectual freedom.

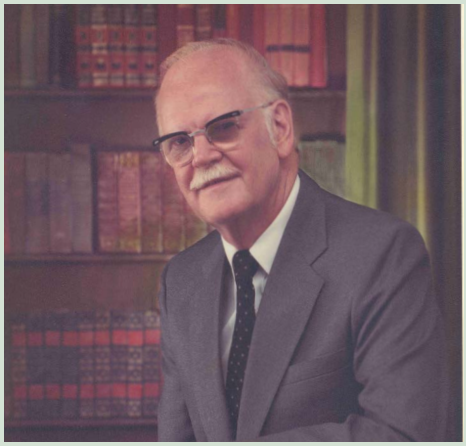
## To Save Space

*ELAN* includes only awards and appointments of national importance and high relevance to our members. Look for these in the news sections. A **Canadian awards page** is available on ELA's website.

# Ex Libris Association Forty Years On, 1986—2026

By Lorne Bruce

In 1985, Stanley Beacock, formerly Chief Librarian at London Public Library, thought it would be a good idea to found an association focusing on the interests of retired librarians. Through Stan's efforts, a $10,000 grant from the federal government's New Horizons For Seniors Program was secured for two years. The first meeting was held November 1986 to establish a board of directors and draft a constitution for ELA. Naturally, Stan was elected president, a position he held until he stepped down in 1989. Since those early days, ELA has grown from its original membership of fewer than 50 to more than 250.



One of the first priorities was the publication in spring 1987 of a newsletter, *Ex Libris News*, which Stan produced. Other projects emerged from the fall annual meetings held with OLA and from suggestions by speakers from a range of backgrounds — academia, archives, libraries, publishers and writers. Over the years, ELA's directors have provided leadership and, in conjunction with members, fostered the growth of a dynamic association, as outlined in the following year-by-year synopsis of its progress.

**1987**: Publication of ***Ex Libris News*** (which became *ELAN* in 2003) on a semi-annual basis begins. A trust to finance a $15,000 project to honour Elizabeth Home Morton, executive director of the Canadian Library Association, 1946 to 1971, is proposed.

**1988**: With the New Horizons funding set to expire, the membership fee for ELA is raised to $10 a year. The group has 122 registered members.

**1989**: Marianne Scott, National Librarian, speaks at the annual meeting and encourages support of historical projects.

**1991**: Farley Mowat recounts his wartime correspondence with his father, Angus Mowat, at the AGM.

**1992**: A membership committee is formed with the specific objective of expanding ELA's membership across Canada. ELA begins its practice of arranging promotional display tables at the CLA and OLA conferences.

**1993**: The membership approves the position of vice-president/president-elect to provide better organizational continuity.



**1994**: ELA adopts its distinctive logo fashioned from a woodcut originally created by Thoreau MacDonald for Bruce Pierce, former editor of the Ryerson Press. Sales of a T-shirt featuring the logo to fund the Morton project begin. Membership reaches 150, and ELA begins holding its own AGM in the autumn after OLA decides to establish its super conference in the winter. Wendy Scott assumes editorship of *Ex Libris News* after Stan Beacock's retirement.

**1995**: *The Morton Years: The Canadian Library Association, 1946 to 1971*, composed by Elizabeth Hulse with a foreword by W. Kaye Lamb, is published at the end of 1995. It sells for $17 with modest success. ELA begins using a standard postal address at the University of Toronto Faculty of Information for its contact information.

**1996** and **1997**: ELA holds two AGMs, one in Kitchener, one in Ottawa, to attract more members and offer events outside Toronto.

**1998**: At the AGM, panellists discuss the impact of the amalgamation of libraries in Metro Toronto which made Toronto's library North America's largest branch system at almost 100.

**2000**: For the Millennium, a special AGM session on libraries and archives is held with prominent speakers debating the future of the National Archives and National Library, which eventually merged in 2004.

**2002**: The W. Kaye Lamb Award for Service to Seniors is established. The first presentations are made to the co-winners, Western Counties Regional Libraries in Nova Scotia and Calgary Public Library. The Ex Libris website, hosted by the University of Toronto Faculty of Information, is launched to showcase projects and keep members informed.

**2003**: ELA receives a bequest of $4,000 from the estate of Dorothy Ryder, long-time association member, former librarian at the National Library and author of *Canadian Reference Sources*.

**2004**: ELA publishes a special issue of ***ELAN – A History of Library and Information Studies Education In Canada*** to celebrate 100 years of library education in Canada that began at McGill University.

**2006**: ELA board of directors approves the launch of **a biographical database of Canadian librarians and information professionals** under the direction of Nancy Williamson. ELA reaches a membership of 200 on its 20th anniversary, featuring a celebratory logo.

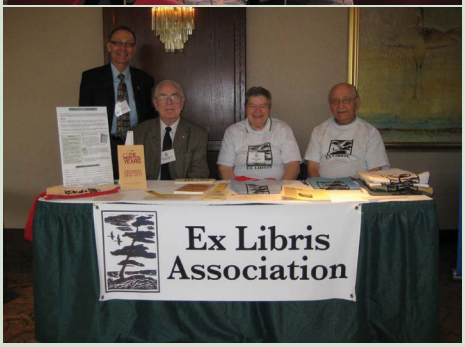





**2007:** ELA kicks off an active program of library tours and luncheons in Ottawa and Toronto for its members by arranging visits to the Library of Parliament, the Library of the National Gallery of Canada and the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library. Tours become an important social event for members.

**2008**: ELA organizes five display booths at CLA, BCLA, APLA, OLA and IFLA in Quebec City to expand its membership and promote its activities.






**2011 to 2013**: ELA members contribute to an internet communications startup plan and a children's education fund in Ethiopia.

**2012**: ELA creates a Facebook site to communicate with people around the world. Suzette Giles begins a popular 17-part series in *ELAN* (2012 to 23) detailing Libraries Named after Librarians.




**2012 to 2013**: ELA writes to the Minister of Heritage Canada to advocate for changes to the administration of Library and Archives Canada (LAC) and to call for a review of LAC's directions.

**2015**: ELA registers its own URL, **www.exlibris.ca**, and begins expanding its website.

**2016**: ELA arranges for the University of Guelph to host the ELA Listserv to better communicate with members.

**2017**: As Canada celebrates its 150th anniversary, ELA becomes a member of the newly formed Canadian Federation of Library Associations-Fédération Canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA-FCAB), after the demise of the Canadian Library Association. The ELA biography project surpasses the 100 mark.

**2018**: Jean Weihs, ELA's dedicated secretary, is appointed a Member of the Order of Canada for her contributions to librarianship.

**2020**: Due to COVID-19, there is no formal in-person gathering. A virtual meeting of 45 members is held in December via Zoom, and this begins to replace in-person conferences and to attract members from across Canada. *ELAN* publishes the **history of librarianship at the University of Ottawa**, an addendum to *A History of Library and Information Studies Education In Canada,* published in 2004.

**2021**: A virtual tour of the new Calgary Central Public Library is organized for ELA.




**2022**: ELA issues a formal statement expressing solidarity with our Ukrainian colleagues. At the virtual AGM, members learn how archives are working toward Truth and Reconciliation calls to action in relation to archival practice in British Columbia.

**2023**: ELA raises funds to establish a 10-year plan to award an annual $2,500 bursary to an Indigenous student in library or archival studies programs in concert with Indspire. ELA begins offering webinars for its members.

**2024**: ELA revises its constitution to move its traditional fall meeting to the spring to allow for better financial reporting on an end-of-year basis and to attract more members.

**2025**: ELA expands its approach to advocacy and member education by arranging presentations to alert members to the crises in school libraries, library safety issues, censorship and underfunding of libraries and archives. ELA is granted vice-regal patronage by Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Mary Simon, Governor General of Canada.

**2026**: ELA membership reaches 250. ELA celebrates its 40th anniversary with a new logo for the occasion.




ELA anniversary logos were designed by John Warrener. For a discussion about the ELA logos, see ***ELAN* Number 62/ Fall 2017**, Page 6. ▮

# Treasures of British Libraries: The Long Library at Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire

By Guy Robertson

You have forgotten almost everything about the Spanish War of Succession (1701 to 1714). Since your last European history class, the Sun King, Prince Eugene, the Holy Roman Emperor and the threat to Vienna have become a blur. But you remember John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, and the Battle of Blenheim (1704), during which he and his allies defeated the French and Bavarian armies. Queen Anne rewarded the duke with a huge estate where he commemorated his victory by building Blenheim Palace.

It is enormous. The largest palace in England, it sits on more than 2,000 acres of parkland. To the modern visitor, it feels too big to be comfortable. Every aspect of its design, every elegant statue, column and painted ceiling gives one the impression that one has entered the home of giants. Possibly, this was the intention of the Duke and John Vanbrugh, the architect. Unfortunately, Vanbrugh argued with Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, over the extravagance of the construction and, finally, he quit. The Duchess did not allow him to return.



Left to design the Long Library was Nicholas Hawksmoor, Vanbrugh's assistant, as well as Sir Christopher Wren. While the architects Hawksmoor worked under became more famous, he was no less accomplished. The Long Library demonstrates his skill in dealing with a demanding client and challenging circumstances, including a reduced budget.

"Hawksmoor has an interesting reputation," says Amy, a graduate student in history at University College London. "He was obviously brilliant, and he got things done. Vanbrugh and Wren relied heavily on him. Recently, however, some writers have suggested that he had dealings in the occult. That has yet to be proven. What we know for sure is that he was a great architectural designer and problem-solver. His libraries are all worth visiting, especially the Long Library and the Codrington Library in All Souls College, Oxford."

Hawksmoor worked on the project from 1722 to 1725. His design led to the creation of one of the longest rooms in any English palace, stretching to 183 feet. He planned the room as a picture gallery and a space to display artefacts the duke had amassed during his career.

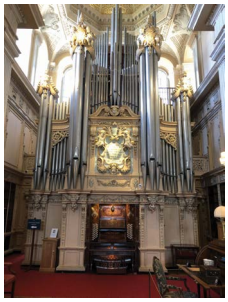
In1749, the third Duke of Marlborough had bookcases installed along the library's walls for a collection of more than 20,000 volumes inherited from his father, Charles Spencer, the third Earl of Sunderland. The Earl's collection was considered one of the finest in Europe. Over the years, however, the Marlborough family's financial problems necessitated its sale. Between 1881 and 1883, much of it was sold at auction; the family spent the raised money on the Palace's maintenance and improvements.



Currently, on the library's shelves is a miscellaneous collection of about 10,000 items, some of which the curators put on display. One can examine first editions of Dickens' novels in excellent condition. Equally popular are the 19th century press cuttings and antique newspapers, which contain lively gossip and accounts of scandals involving posh persons of note. But what interests many scholars is a group of Napoleon Bonaparte's personal and public letters.

"People like to view items from the shelves," says Bruce, a London solicitor who enjoys annual visits to the palace. "However, the main attraction is the physical library itself. It feels like several spaces combined to make one extended space. You can imagine yourself getting cozy with a book in the furnished area by the fireplace, but other spaces you simply wander through while admiring the overall layout."

At the south end of the library stands an imposing memorial statue of Queen Anne, who gave the first Duke of Marlborough the possession of the Blenheim lands. At the opposite end, one finds the huge Willis Pipe Organ, one of the largest in a European private residence. Installed in 1891, it features 2,300 pipes, four manuals and 53 speaking stops. During the First World War, the library became a hospital ward for wounded soldiers who enjoyed listening to the organ. In 1940, up to 400 boys evacuated from Malvern College used the library as a dormitory and an organ recital venue as well as a cricket pitch. Queen Anne might not have been amused.





These days, aside from its attractions for tourists and researchers, the Long Library is used for fashion shows and lavish dinners attended by up to 300 guests. Forget the Sun King and Prince Eugene if you will, but you will not forget your visit to the Long Library.

With thanks to Amanda Hazelwood for her advice and assistance.

**For more information about** Blenheim Palace visit the palace **website**.

***Guy Robertson*** *is an instructor at Langara College, teaching library history, reference services and records management. He is a disaster planning consultant and the author of five books on library and archival topics.* ▮

# A Brief History of Library Conferences: Libraries During Times of Trouble, 1914 to 1945

By Michael White

In *ELAN* Spring 2026, we explored how librarians in the late 1800s and early 1900s began holding annual conferences to share information, develop professional standards, socialize and build a community of practice. In this article, we'll explore the role of librarians and library conferences during times of national crisis, namely the First World War, 1914 to 1918, and the Second World War, 1939 to 1945.

In addition to helping to professionalize librarianship, library conferences raised the public profile of librarians and libraries. Newspapers in Canada and the U.S. regularly reported on library conferences. This overview will focus mainly on the Ontario Library Association (OLA). *The Globe and Mail* (*The Globe* prior to 1936), as well as other Ontario newspapers, reported on the OLA annual meeting every year during the period.

The 1914 OLA meeting took place in April, several months prior to the war outbreak, so there was no discussion of the international situation or libraries' role in wartime. Historians have noted few people in the spring and summer of 1914 expected a major war at all. The OLA meeting was notable for being the largest one held to date with 193 attendees. During this meeting, news arrived that librarians in Saskatchewan had formed the Saskatchewan Library Association, the second such Canadian association.

References to the war were also absent from the OLA meeting in early April 1915, perhaps because Canadian forces did not engage in fighting until the Second Battle of Ypres, which began April 22. Two speakers made comments that were eerily prescient of our current times. Peter McArthur, the well-known writer, poet and farmer from Appin, Ontario, gave an address that "bristled" with humour and, reportedly, captivated the audience. His topic was "Canadian country folk and rural libraries." In poking fun at the card index system, he declared that "if no books had been written about boots – everything about them from the winged sandals of Mercury to the scandals in Ottawa could be found in the card index … A genius might be devised for writing books in the future through the card index system" thus allowing people to "think with libraries and not alone with [their] own brain." Today, librarians and educators contemplate a world where generative AI and large language models "write" books and "answer" questions, relieving humans of the burdens of reading, thinking and creating.

In his presidential address, W.O. Carson, OLA president and London Public Library chief librarian, alluded to the war and postwar period. He declared Canada was close to a "turning point in its history," and it might choose to move closer to the British Empire or become independent, which would almost surely lead to "Canada becoming a part of a great North American federation." He urged librarians to buy the "best literature" to inform the public on these issues.

OLA finally mobilized for war at its 1916 meeting, where 175 members and guests met in the Toronto Public Library Reference Library. George Locke, Toronto Public Library Chief Librarian, presented a paper on the value of book lists on the Great War. He praised Sir Max Aitken (later Lord Beaverbrook) for his book, *Canada in Flanders*. On Monday evening, Dr. C.C. James, Commissioner of Agriculture for Canada, spoke about the importance of library services to farmers and rural communities. He noted Germany had greatly expanded its agricultural and industrial production during the war and was likely to maintain it after peace. Dr. James also spoke about the need to invest in libraries and technical schools where children of rural communities could learn the "principles of agriculture and gardening, farm mechanics and domestic sciences."



**Mary J. L. Black librarian, Fort William Public Library, 1909 to 1937.**

The OLA meeting in 1917 was notable because it saw the election of the first woman as president, Mary Black of Fort William Public Library. Although not a trained librarian, Black had turned the Fort William Library into one of the most successful in Ontario, circulating 90,000 volumes a year or about five per resident, one third of whom spoke one of 29 different languages. Black was also an active member of the American Library Association, serving as Small Libraries Roundtable chair. In the early 1930s, she was a member of a special commission sponsored by the Carnegie corporation to investigate the current state and needs of Canadian libraries.

In the decade leading up to Second World War, Ontario librarians were concerned about troubles at home and abroad. At the 1936 OLA meeting, invited speaker John A. Lowe, Rochester (New York) Public Library director, noted libraries are "calm havens" in a "noisy world" roiled by technological change, economic depression and political strife. He also urged librarians to "learn more about books and their contents and not just become experts at cataloguing."

The theme of libraries as havens in troubled times continued during Second World War. At the 1940 OLA meeting, invited speaker Winnifred Kydd, former Queen's University dean of women, suggested reading was an effective way to ease the "strain of war" on public morale. She urged libraries to stock the best information to help the public understand current events and prepare for the postwar world. Attendees also heard about progress on developing a pension system for all library workers, a joint initiative of OLA and the Ontario Department of Education.

By 1944, the libraries' role in the postwar world was very much on librarians' minds. At the 1944 OLA meeting, Angus Mowat, inspector of public libraries in Ontario, argued libraries should receive grants in proportion to public schools. He described public libraries as "grindstones on which Canadians can sharpen the tools given them by schools and universities." In 1943, grants to public schools amounted to $3.76 per capita while library grants were only $0.0117 per capita.

A glance at any library conference program today will reveal that librarians and library associations are still grappling with the problems of political strife, war, immigration, economic inequality, technological change and library funding.

***Michael White*** *is a science and engineering librarian at Queen's University. He previously worked for the Patent and Trademark Depository Library Program in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and has published several articles and book chapters on patent information.* ∎

**Sources**

*The Ontario Library Association: An Historical Sketch*, 1900 to 1925. University of Toronto Press, 1926.

Newspaper articles consulted for this article were retrieved from the ProQuest Historical Newspapers database via Queen's University Library.

# News from Canadian Library/ Information Studies Schools



Compiled by Ross Gordon

**University of British Columbia iSchool Library, Archival and Information Studies (SLAIS)**
By Guy Robertson

MASLIS candidate Carolina Rocha and MLIS candidate Anika Escher received Co-op Student of the Year Awards for 2024-25. Carolina and Anika look forward to further accomplishments following their graduation. In June, the iSchool announced it had completed a ***Strategic Plan for 2026 to 2030***. Created following discussions with faculty, staff members, students and other stakeholders, the plan was influenced by a 2023 UBC Faculty of Arts external review and ALA's 2024 accreditation review. The authors have emphasized the iSchool's core values and underscored its mission to educate future professionals, researchers and scholars in the information fields. It recognizes and aligns with UBC's new Faculty of Arts Strategic Plan, the UBC Indigenous Strategic Plan and UBC Strategic Directions 2025 to 2030. PhD candidate Victoria Rahbar was awarded the 2025-2026 Eugene Garfield Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship. Her dissertation, *Understanding Difference Through Manga: A Study of Young Manga Readers*, focuses on the ways in which neurodivergent readers desire manga, including neurodivergent differences.

**Western University, Faculty of Information and Media Studies (FIMS)**
By Becky Blue

FIMS and the MLIS program are pleased to announce that, post-review, the program received full ALA accreditation for another seven years, with the results announced in July. Leslie Weir, Librarian and Archivist of Canada, visited Western on June 2 and was able to spend some time visiting LIS students, faculty and staff in FIMS. In the morning, she participated in a public conversation with Geoffrey Little, vice-provost and Western Libraries Chief Librarian, and in the afternoon, she spoke to students in LIS 9200 – Descriptive Cataloging Theory and Practice, followed by a casual reception and meet-and-greet. LIS Professor **Jacquelyn Burkell** was named scholar-in-residence for the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario (IPC). Professor Burkell will be called upon for her expertise in youth privacy and digital platforms. The scholar-in-residence position has a one-year term.

**University of Toronto, Faculty of Information (FI, iSchool)**
By Ann Brocklehurst

Renovations are about to get underway at the faculty's Bissell Building. For the duration of the revitalization project, expected to last up to three years, the faculty is operating out of two buildings at 455 and 481 Spadina Ave., just north of College Street. Classes and other faculty activities, including alumni events, will be held at St. George campus venues. Details of the revitalization and information about the new Spadina facilities can be found at **ischool.utoronto.ca**. The faculty is also gearing up to recruit for its new four-year Bachelor of Information degree, which will welcome its first cohort of students in Fall 2027. The program places a strong emphasis on applied learning, collaboration and the integration of technical, social and design perspectives. The faculty is also in the process of hiring a permanent director for the relaunched iSchool Institute.

**University of Ottawa, School of Information Studies/École des sciences de l'information (ÉSIS)**
By Hélène Carrier

The School of Information Studies welcomes Hélène Carrier as ÉSIS director for one year, effective July 1. She was interim director, 2017 to 2020; her career of more than three decades includes senior management positions at the University of Ottawa Library. ÉSIS congratulates Dr. Stefanie Haustein, appointed full professor in May 2026. Co-director of the Scholarly Communications Lab, Dr. Haustein is a world-leading scholar with international media coverage at the highest level in bibliometrics research. Admissions for 2026-27 are at an all-time high for the school, with 43 first-year students. MIS student Hafsa Er-Rouijl is the inaugural recipient of the **Friends of the Ottawa Public Library Scholarship for Diversity and Equity in public librarianship**. The faculty recruitment campaign begins this fall for a tenured-track position in library science to replace Prof. Mary Cavanagh, who retired in 2025. ÉSIS has been invited to participate in the creation of a new international initiative: the Network of Francophone Information Science Schools (Réseau des écoles francophones de sciences de l'information). It brings together institutions such as EBSI (Montreal), Enssib (France), EBAD (Senegal), ESI (Morrocco) and HEG (Switzerland). The mission is to: strengthen collaboration among our schools to pool best practices and develop joint projects; promote the French language in teaching and research in information science; and create research collaborations and enrich educational programs.

**McGill University, School of Information Studies**
By Peter F McNally

After spending 18 months in temporary quarters, the School of Information Studies has returned to its home base, 3661 Peel St. The "mansion" has been significantly upgraded with an elevator and enhanced access. Roof and window structural problems were corrected as were problems with asbestos. An incoming master's class of 105 is the largest in the school's history. McGill produced 81 MISt graduates and one PhD in spring 2026. Fall 2026 saw 108 students enter the MISt program, the largest master's class in the school's history. Five entered the PhD program.

**Université de Montréal, École de bibliothéconomie et des sciences de l'information (EBSI)**
By Isabelle Bourgey and Martin Bélanger

Two new undergraduate programs in data management are now offered at EBSI: a microprogram (three courses) providing an introduction to data management and a certificate program (10 courses) that integrates the application of data management techniques in specific fields of humanities and social sciences, such as history and demography. Prof. Dominic Forest was appointed University of Montreal Press scientific director for a five-year term effective June 1. The Association des bibliothécaires du Québec – Quebec Library Association awarded two scholarships to master's students in information science: Jacinthe Paillé received the Anne Hébert Memorial Bursary; and Hind Obad Fathallah received the Professional Development Bursary. Professors Dominique Maurel and Sabine Mas retired at the end of May 2026. Prof. Maurel's area of expertise was information behaviours, information governance and knowledge management. Prof. Mas's area of expertise was records management. Professorial position openings will be posted this fall.

**Dalhousie University, Faculty of Management, Department of Information Science (DIS)**
By Philippe Mongeon and Alison Brown

Student engagement leadership continues to be key in our department's success. This spring we launched the inaugural issue of our DIS Inform newsletter, which highlighted the many ways students, faculty, staff and alumni are advancing the field of information science and fostering community within DIS and beyond. The department also saw the launch of DISpatches, a student-led podcast that will showcase the people, projects and research shaping the DIS community. Research activity continues to flourish, with initiatives such as the Multiliteracy Assessment Framework Delphi Study and the Skateboard Community Archive Project demonstrating the department's commitment to community-engaged scholarship and addressing real-world challenges through information research. After more than a decade as director of the School of Information Management and Information Programs, Dr. Sandra Toze stepped down from the role. Under her stewardship, the department expanded its educational offerings, strengthened its reputation, launched innovative undergraduate programs and helped bring the long-envisioned PhD in Information program to fruition. We are deeply grateful for Dr. Toze's leadership and unwavering dedication and support to students, faculty and the field more broadly. Stepping into the role on an interim basis is Dr. Alison Brown, whose dedication to teaching, scholarship and community building positions her well to guide the department through its next chapter. The department is also preparing to celebrate the remarkable career of Dr. Louise Spiteri, who will be retiring at yearend. Dr. Spiteri has made exceptional contributions as a researcher, educator, administrator and leader. She was director of the School of Information Management, director of the Master of Information Management and MLIS programs and chair of Dalhousie Senate. Internationally recognized for her scholarship in knowledge organization, metadata, cataloguing and information management, she has influenced generations of students and helped shape the profession through her extensive research, teaching excellence and service to national and international associations. We are grateful for her lasting legacy and the privilege of working alongside such an extraordinary colleague.

## News from the Provinces & the North

# British Columbia News

By Guy Robertson



Since February, **Capilano University (CapU) has partnered with Squamish PL** to share programs, educational assets and student opportunities along the Sea-to-Sky Corridor, which stretches 135 kms from West Vancouver through the Coastal Mountains to Pemberton.

In June, Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) prepared for high summer temperatures and invited the public to **cool down** comfortably in the 39 branches that serve Vancouver Island, Haida Gwaii and BC's Central Coast. Most branches have HVAC systems allowing patrons to relax with books and other materials and avoid record-breaking temperatures that have led to health problems, droughts and wildfire spread.

In June, Vancouver Public Library (VPL)'s **Oakridge Branch** closed in preparation for the 2027 opening of the new branch which will be the second largest in VPL's system. In the new **Oakridge Park** complex, the library will attract patrons from the residential towers on the park site and also those who shop in its retail areas, enjoy activities at its community centre and attend classes at the new Fairleigh Dickinson University campus.

At VPL's Central Library, renovations to the 11,000 sq. ft. **Children's Library** continue. New features will include an early learning space for the youngest patrons, a reading tree, giant evergreen cones and reading nooks for children and caregivers.

University of British Columbia (UBC) Library announced in August that its **Koerner Library** has started renovations to the north side of Level 2, making space for the Education Library, which closed its original location in June 2025. The education collection includes books, journals

and other media that cover teaching strategies, curriculum evaluation and research in educational fields.

UBC has announced the library will begin the library management and discovery systems upgrade to **Alma and Primo**, new integrated cloud-based platforms to allow better controls and stability for Canada's second largest academic library. The new systems release has been scheduled for late summer 2027.

The **Alcuin Society** exhibited from June to September the winning entries of the 43rd annual **Alcuin Society Awards for Excellence in Book Design in Canada** in Simon Fraser University (SFU) W.A.C. Bennett Library. This year's categories included Children's, Comics, Pictorial, Poetry, Prose and Reference. After leaving SFU, the winning entries will be exhibited at major libraries across Canada and then at the Frankfort and Leipzig Bookfairs.

Douglas College Library hosted a student panel in October entitled **"Talking with students: discussing generative AI in education."** Instructors, staff and administrators heard how students feel about AI and its effects on their education.

***Guy Robertson** is an instructor at Langara College, teaching library history, reference service and records management. He is a disaster planning consultant and the author of five books on library and archival topics.*

## Prairies News

By Alvin M. Schrader



The Manitoba Library Association - Prison Libraries Committee, for the third year, took part in the community walk for *Prisoners' Justice Day* on August 10 for those who passed or were harmed by Western justice systems, handing out lunches and books to community members.

The Saskatchewan Library Association hosted its annual ***One Book One Province*** program in April with the title *Towards a Prairie Atonement*, by Trevor Herriot. A grassland activist and birder, he is the author of several award-winning books and a regular poster to his blog "Grass Notes" (**trevorherriot.blogspot.ca**). Since 2017, the *One Book* program has given residents an opportunity to share experiences around a selected book by a Saskatchewan author, promoting community engagement, literacy, a reading culture, libraries and literacy organizations and other objectives.

**Dale Askey** assumed the role of University Librarian for UBC Library effective September 1. He was appointed vice-provost (Library and Museums) and Chief Librarian at the University of Alberta in 2018, with a portfolio encompassing the Library, Museums and University of Alberta Press. His last day was July 15, 2026. Under his leadership, Library and Museums expanded in the areas of fundraising, infrastructure, leadership and reputation-building, resulting in the largest ever donation to the library to establish the Geoffrey & Robyn Sperber Health Sciences Library in 2023.

Edmonton Public Library (EPL) and the University of Alberta formalized a **framework to build on longstanding collaboration and commitment** to lifelong learning, knowledge-sharing, and community engagement in late July 2026. Experiential learning opportunities will be expanded for students through work-integrated placements, research opportunities, student access to new internships, capstone projects and volunteer opportunities at EPL. Future programming at the Stanley A. Milner Branch will use EPL's Makerspaces, recording studios, "The Kitchen" and the massive two-storey interactive digital installations. EPL has also signed a similar partnership agreement with **Norquest College**.

**Sharon Day was appointed CEO** of EPL, effective August 17. She brings more than 20 years of progressively responsible leadership experience, including 17 with EPL. For the past four years, she has served as executive director, customer experience, with strategic and operational responsibility for all 21 branches. She is recognized across the public library sector for her advocacy on digital content and e-book and e-audiobook publication models and has served on eBound Canada's board of directors. Day has a longstanding commitment to customer experience, community-focused service, equitable access to information and intellectual freedom and helped develop and implement national intellectual freedom training for public library staff. EPL will miss former CEO Pilar Martinez, with 26 years of progressively responsible leadership at EPL, culminating in her appointment as CEO in 2015. She stepped down in August. See the notice in "Retirements," page 27.

Toni Samek is taking over Prairies News in 2027. *ELAN* thanks Alvin for his long-time dedication to this task.

***Alvin M. Schrader** is professor emeritus at the University of Alberta, School of Library and Information Studies.*

## Ontario News

By Vivienne James



Thanks to the Lions Club, the **Guelph PL (GPL)** has made **Envoy devices** available for people with print disabilities, including those with learning disabilities or ALS, to access books in a new way**.** In July, **Comic Con**, an annual celebration of comics, cosplay, gaming and fandom at GPL, was bustling with fans.

**Andrea Cecchetto** has been appointed chief executive officer, **Markham PL**, succeeding Catherine Bliss who served as CEO for 24 years.

**Kristine D'Souza** has been appointed CEO and director of **Pickering PLs**. It is one of Ontario's most highly used public libraries, serving about 46,000 active members.

Developed by studying circulation statistics and feedback and to capitalize on the success of **Pierre Berton Resource Library** **Lendery**, **Vaughan PLs** has opened a second Lendery at

the Bathurst Clark Resource Library Marketplace.

**Bathurst Clark Resource Library** presented **Exit the Horse Exhibit: The Tribute Fossmobile.** The exhibit explored the exploits of Canada's first automotive inventors and the deep roots of motoring realities we take for granted today. George Foote Foss of Sherbrook Quebec built Canada's first gasoline-powered automobile.

**The TD Bank Group** has invested $416,040 in **Ottawa PL's** programs supporting the new Central Branch at Adisoke. **Crabtree Foundation** reached the $1 million milestone in philanthropic support for its Unlock Potential campaign. Ottawa residents hold more library cards than ever before but fewer are walking through the door. Recognizing that, a new **"third space"** vision is being developed where staff play a vital role in connecting the community to knowledge, services and experiences, increasingly through phone calls, chats and emails, in addition to digital technology available for quick information in some libraries.

Teens who want to make real change happen through their local library can join the **Richmond Hill PL Teen Action Group** to develop leadership skills and earn community hours. Also, the **Central Branch closed** for a makeover designed to transform the library as the heart of the community.

As the City grows, so does **Toronto PL**: A new branch at **Quayside**, a new and rapidly growing waterfront community where TPL will have space meeting community needs and serve residents. A second Quayside branch is planned for the new Island community nearby, **Ookwemin Minising**. The St. Lawrence Library will be relocated to meet the needs of a growing community. In North York, teen space has been newly renovated after a year-long closure. In North York, **Youth Hub** services are now available where teens can connect with staff, use technology and much more.

At **Guelph University Library** a new exhibit, **Breaking Ground: Women and Canada's Agricultural Past**, marks the UN's International Year of the Woman Farmer. To support the university's journey towards reconciliation, Indigenous Initiatives and the Indigenous Student Centre have partnered with the library to **highlight Indigenous writers, content and research frameworks**.

**MacMaster University Libraries Impact Report 2026** highlights new and creative solutions to situations facing the campus community. Two **conferences** were hosted this summer for library workers from the GTA, Canada and the U.S., exploring emerging opportunities, challenges and ways to strengthen library teaching practices.

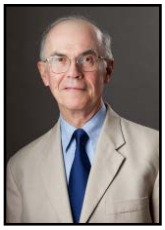
At **U of T,** Fisher Rare Book Library's 2024 **Women on the Move: An Exhibition of Travel Books** has won the Association of College and Research Libraries **2026 Leab Awards** in three categories. **Constantia Constantinou** began a seven-year term as the new **U of T** librarian, in September.

**York University Libraries** joined **Keep@Downsview**, a shared program supporting member academic libraries (Western, McMaster, Toronto, Queen's, Ottawa, Memorial) in providing secure, environmentally controlled storage and co-ordinated collection management at a Toronto facility.

***Vivienne James** worked at TPL for more than 25 years, was branch head of Queen Saulter, St. Lawrence and Spadina Rd. Libraries and was responsible for adult collection development for the Black and Caribbean Heritage Collection in Parkdale until retiring. She is an ELA board member.*

## Quebec News

By Peter F. McNally



At its May 7 Spring Social, L'Association des bibliothécaires du Québec – Quebec Library Association (ABQLA) presented the 2026 **awards**: the Anne Galler Award, the Professional Development Award and the Anne Hébert Award.

ABQLA elected its **executive council and directors** for 2026/27 at the June 29 AGM. The co-presidents are Madelyn Creanberry and Megan Moore. ABQLA is developing a tradition of dual presidents, a reluctance having emerged for one person alone to handle the position.

The **Westmount Public Library** closed, March 6 to April 9, because of bed bugs.

The Haskell Free Library and Opera House **officially opened its new door** to Canada on Wednesday, June 10. Canadians have been accessing the border-straddling library through an emergency door after the Trump administration barred them from the main entrance which is on the U.S. side.

Mathieu Lacombe, Quebec's Minister of Culture and Communications, announced the reappointment of **Marie Grégoire as head** of Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ).

BAnQ's 20th anniversary saw the publication of a critical assessment, ***BAnQ visions pour une institution phare.*** (Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal).

Many thanks to Pierre Guilmette for his years of providing Quebec News.

***Peter McNally** is professor emeritus at McGill University, School of Information Studies.*

## Maritimes News

By Penny Logan



The **Atlantic Provinces Library Association** has had various names and focuses since the first Maritime Library Association started in 1918. In 1957, when Newfoundland joined the group, the name changed from Maritime to Atlantic and now includes libraries and library workers from New Brunswick, Newfoundland & Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. The association has held **annual conferences** every year from 1971 until 2020 when the conference

was postponed due to the COVID pandemic. Virtual conferences were held 2021 to 2025, and there has been much enthusiasm for returning to a traditional meeting. The first face-to-face APLA conference in six years was held June 15 to 17 at the Delta Hotel in Dartmouth, N.S., with the theme: "Together we thrive: Sustaining Libraries and Communities." It was a fitting theme, certainly, for all libraries but perhaps especially so this year for Nova Scotia Public Libraries.

The nine Regional Public Libraries in Nova Scotia are set to make hard choices in the coming years as they grapple with core funding levels that have not kept pace with increasing costs. Erin Comeau, chair of the Council of Regional Librarians, sent a **letter to the minister** responsible for libraries outlining the need for a core funding increase.

The Annapolis Valley Regional Library made the **CBC news** when it did the math and, with no additional funds, made the decision to close five of its branches. Making this a truly great story, an author in shining armour has come to the rescue! Rachel Reid, author of the enormously successful Heated Rivalry, has **committed $300,000** to keep the five branches open to the end of the fiscal year. The author has committed to **other fundraising efforts**.

The press around the donation has highlighted public library needs and the unwavering public support for this service. Other measures will have to be taken, of course, for the long term. Erin Comeau, executive director and regional librarian with Western Counties Regional Library, remains positive the libraries and province can work together to reach an agreement resulting in sustainable support for the nine regional libraries.

Future Maritime News will come to you from Peter Webster, librarian emeritus, Saint Mary's University, as I pass the torch.

Editor's note: *ELAN* thanks Penney for her wonderful work on this column.

***Penny Logan** worked in public and hospital libraries, retiring in 2015 as Manager, Library Services for the Nova Scotia Health Authority.*

## Newfoundland & Labrador News

By Emily Blackmore



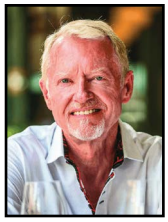
After a six-year pause, the Newfoundland and Labrador Library Association returned this spring to hosting a conference. The **2026 NLLA Conference** took place on June 5 at Memorial University in St. John's, NL. The full-day event was well-attended by folks from across the library world in NL and included presentations on a diverse range of topics from book banning to AI to poetry and reference services. The conference was hybrid, which enabled library workers from across NL to attend virtually, with almost as many people attending online as in-person. Library workers from academic, public, health and other backgrounds came together to celebrate with excitement our diverse community. Participants were engaged, whether they were presenting or taking it in. And everyone was excited to be there and see the library community together in person for the first time in years.

The conference closed with a discussion about NLLA's future, a session that was built around thinking intentionally about how to renew NLLA and what direction to take as we rebuild. This was a lively conversation with networking and community identified as important factors for NL library workers. A new group of organizers came forward to help shepherd NLLA into its new era. One result of this conference, above all else, is the renewed excitement and energy surrounding NLLA and our shared NL community. The importance of this conference and this group to the library community was on full display. This energy bodes well for our shared future. For a province with a small population, after the conference, it certainly felt like there's a big future ahead.

***Emily Blackmore**, children's and youth services and collections librarian at the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Libraries, was president of APLA in 2024/5 and is involved with the Newfoundland and Labrador Library Association.*

## News from the North

By Ken Haycock



The half-year's **defining story** crossed all three territories: Canada's library postal rates. Bill C-15 had proposed scrapping the statutory "library book rate" and free postage for blind readers — lifelines for northern libraries that serve fly-in communities by mail. After sustained advocacy, the Commons Finance Committee amended the bill on February 23 to restore both protections, which NWT Public Library Services welcomed.

**Nunavut**

In June, the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency **announced up to $825,000** —matched by the Government of Nunavut — for a three-year renovation of the Unikkaarvik Visitor Centre and Iqaluit Centennial Library building. The **territory's 2026 to 2030 business plan** confirms continued public-library support, including direct operation of the Iqaluit library and priority for Inuktut-language materials. In February, Arviat was confirmed as the main campus of the **Inuit Nunangat University,** Canada's first Inuit-led university, with the first cohort hoped for 2030. An academic library will presumably follow, though none has been announced.

**Northwest Territories**

The most consequential change was in Hay River, where the volunteer committee operating the NWT Centennial Library ended its role on April 30 amid a funding dispute over the head librarian position. The **library reopened** on June 9 under short-term staffing, with reduced weekday hours while the NWT government and the town negotiate governance. Yellowknife **launched a review of municipal facilities**, including its library. Range Lake North School won a $30,000 **Indigo Love of Reading** grant for its aging collection, and

Aurora College profiled its four libraries which hold more than 48,000 items with a Northern and Indigenous focus.

**Yukon**

The Whitehorse Public Library added VOX Books — print titles with a built-in audio player —and Yukon University Library introduced a Research Data Management Guide addressing Indigenous Data Sovereignty. The 2026/27 territorial community services budget provides $2.83 million for public-library operations, with $50,000 in capital for Whitehorse Public Library upgrades and $11,000 for community library equipment. Recovery continued from the 2025 Tagish Community Library fire.

Thanks to Ken Haycock for filling in while we searched for a new local contributor to News from the North. He wrote this, using AI for research and drafting within defined parameters. He reviewed, edited and verified it. Melani Adams will take over this column starting with the Spring 2027 issue.

***Ken Haycock** is executive director of Better Boards. Better Communities. He is professor emeritus at UBC and San Jose State University and the founder of Project LLEAD.*

# Archives News

By Susan Hart



The Canadian archival community is always buzzing with news. I've shaken up the kaleidoscope, and here are the items that came out on top.

**Canadian archivists have been bombarded with a high volume of requests for ancestry documentation from citizenship seekers.** Canada's recently passed *Bill C-3: An Act to Amend the Citizenship Act* (2025) permits "lost Canadians" and their descendants to claim Canadian citizenship, so long as they can trace their family line back to a Generation Zero ancestor born or naturalized in Canada. This has resulted in many eager applicants from around the world – but especially from just the other side of the 49th parallel – beating down the doors of Canadian archival repositories. Significant workload pressures have resulted. The Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) is advocating with the federal government for additional funding and support for affected archival institutions. See Elizabeth Thompson's 2026-08-17 CBC article, featuring an interview with ACA President Alyssa Hyduk.

**Chinese Canadians have gained access to their ancestors' immigration records – and reveal documentation of surveillance, exclusion and fractured family histories.** Prior to 1947, people of Chinese origin or descent in Canada were denied citizenship and subjected to registration and surveillance under the *Chinese Immigration Act*, also known as the *Chinese Exclusion Act*. Some restrictions remained, however, until 1967, and even more time passed before there was an official apology (by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, June 22, 2006). The government records of this shameful treatment, held at Library and Archives Canada, remained closed until a 2021 access to information challenge led by June Chow, then a Master of Archival Studies student at the University of British Columbia (now working at the University of Toronto Libraries, Richard Charles Lee Chinese Canadian Archives.) Work continues to make these records, so important to many Canadian families, accessible. For a more detailed discussion of this journey, see June Chow's March 2025 post, "The right to remember the past: Opening Chinese immigration records in Canada's national archives," and her 2026 *Archivaria* article, "The Right to Our Past: Community Approaches to Access and Repair of Chinese Immigration Records in Canada's National Archives."

***Susan Hart** is a former BC government archivist and has been active in the Association of Canadian Archivists and the Archives Association of British Columbia.* ▮

# Milestones



## Obituaries

Compiled by Frances Davidson-Arnott and Bob Henderson

**George Douglas Peter Archibald** died March 13, 2026, age 83, in Vancouver, BC. BLS (UBC '66). He spent his career working in VPL branch libraries, 1966-2000, serving first as a reference librarian and later as a branch head.

**Margaret Hazel Baker (née Eveleigh)** died March 16, 2026, age 88, in Barrie, ON. She worked at the Grace Hospital and Gosling Memorial Library, St. John's NL, before moving to the Metric Commission and then in tourism, with both the provincial and federal governments in Newfoundland and the Northwest Territories.

**Elizabeth Anne Bateman** died June 27, 2026, age 69, in Toronto, ON. MLS (U of T '89). Anne had a 36-year career with Ernst & Young.

**Evelyn Bayefsky** died August 21, 2026, age 102, in Toronto, ON. She was a research librarian with the Toronto Board of Education for more than two decades, handling curriculum planning inquiries on the rights of women and non-discrimination. As a reviewer of proposed textbooks for Ontario schools, she was an integral part of the effort to ensure the absence of bias against women and minorities in the education system.

**Marilyn Anne Bisschop (née Neufeld)** died March 17, 2026, age 83, in Coldstream, BC. As a librarian, she certainly appreciated a good book – but was just as happy to set it aside for a chat.

**M. Linda Bone (née Williams)** died August 10, 2026, age 71, in London, ON. She worked at Western Ontario's Science and Weldon Libraries for 35 years.

**Alice Boyd Braybrooke (née Noble)** died April 8, 2026, age 97, in Halifax, NS. BLS ('67). She worked at the Killam Library, Dalhousie, until retirement.

**Wendy Alen Brunelle (née Watson)** died September 14, 2026, age 82, in Toronto. BLS

(U of O), MLS (U of T '74). She was Chief Librarian, Imperial Oil Library 1971-73. She then joined the world of radio, television and film.

**Veronica Joan Bunce (née Hainworth)** died on November 30, 2025, age 91, in North Battleford, SK. Joan was children's librarian at both the old Carnegie PL (Allan Sapp Gallery) and the new North Battleford PL until retiring in 1994.

**Keith Douglas Bunnell** died June 22, 2026, age 75, in Vancouver, BC. MLS (UBC '76). He was reference and collections librarian (Humanities and Social Sciences Division), Walter C. Koerner Library, UBC. He was named Librarian Emeritus in 2022.

**Susan Mary-De Burns** died April 15, 2026, age 64, in Halifax, NS. MLIS (Western '09). She was the co-ordinator at the Saint Mary's University Ferguson Library for "Print – Handicapped Students," 1994 to 1999. She was an assistive technologist at Wilford Laurier U, Western and Waterloo. She was a school librarian at North Colchester High School and Pugwash High School and worked as an evening and weekend prison librarian at the Nova Institution for Women. She later became a records manager at Dalhousie University until 2023.

**Cathy Ching (née Holenski)** died August 11, 2026, age 64, in the Pembina Valley, MB. A library technician, she worked as an educational assistant at Morden Collegiate Institute. She served South Central Regional Library for 20 years, first as administrator of the Morden branch, then the regional office in Winkler as a cataloguer. She was director for eight years. She and her team received the first-ever **Manitoba Library Association Human Rights Book** award.

**Elaine Debra Citrome** died August 5, 2026, age 79, in Ottawa, ON. BLS (U of T '68). Elaine worked as a teacher-librarian in Montreal schools and then for many years as a children's librarian at Ottawa PL.

**Evelyn Mary Anne Collins** died May 30, 2026, age 95, in Toronto, ON. MLS (U of T '79). She was a librarian at the E.J. Pratt Library at Victoria College, U of T, and then was head of circulation, head of reference and archivist of the rare books collection at the John M. Kelly Library, University of St. Michael's College, mid-1980s to 2010.

**Mary W. Davie** died May 28, 2026, age 95, in Victoria, BC. She earned a library degree and later worked for North York PL. She was Chief Librarian and researcher at Morgan Stanley's Toronto office for 10 years.

**Marion Joyce Dorosh** died August 22, 2026, age 87, in Mississauga, ON. BLS (UBC '66). After working in public, university and corporate libraries, she returned to her first love, working as a high school librarian.

**Carol Jane Elder** died July 18, 2026, age 76, in Victoria, BC. LT (Grant MacEwan College), MLS (U of A '82). She worked at Vancouver Community College and at public libraries in Fort McMurray and Surrey. She was an instructor in the Langara College lib tech program, taught at UBC SLIS and in the online community library training program. She was 2001 to 2003 BCLA President.

**Margaret Ewert (née Sawatzky)** died June 1, 2026, age 99, in Saskatoon, SK. MLS (U of Seattle). She was a librarian and English instructor at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg.

**Dr. Eileen Goltz** died May 6, 2025, age 93, in Ottawa, ON. MLS (Western '74). She was a public documents specialist in the Laurentian U Library, retiring in 1997. She was on many committees and concerned about working conditions for union members and women's rights. She was an ELA member.

**Gisela (Giselle) Guenther** died August 10, 2026, age 87, in Grafton, NS. As a career librarian, she had a life-long deep connection and appreciation for literature and culture.

**Alison Diane Harris (née Hough)** died January 29, 2026, age 48, in Toronto, ON. MLIS (U of T '02). She was a branch head and children's librarian at Toronto PL.

**A. Gertrude (Trudi) Haslett (née Barrett)** died June 21, 2026, age 83, in Saint John, NB. BLS (U of T '68). Trudi worked for many years as the children's librarian at the Saint John Regional Library.

**Linda Anne Helson** died July 9, 2026, age 82, in Dundas, ON. She received OLA's Larry Moore Distinguished Service Award in 1996 when she was the Ancaster High School teacher-librarian.

**Jennifer Kimberly "Kimber" Johnson** died June 14, 2026, age 58, in East Loon Lake, NS. MLIS (Dalhousie '91). She was senior information analyst in corporate information management with Halifax Regional Municipality.

**Elizabeth Jane Jones (née Cheslock)** died July 26, 2026, age 86, in Radium Hot Springs, BC. In 2002, she became director of the Radium Hot Springs PL.

**Claire Barbara Kelly (née Hudson)** died August 7, 2026, age 93, in Pointe-Claire, QC. Diploma in Library Sciences (Concordia '76). She managed the Research Library at Merck Frosst until 2000.

**Ronald (Ron) Alan Lewis** died October 29, 2025, age 94, in Mahone Bay, NS. B.A., Master of Divinity degrees (Wheaton College, Ohio). He was university librarian, Saint Mary's U, Halifax, 1976 to retirement. He was active as a library consultant and member of the National Library of Canada Advisory Board.

**Cathy Jean Lindsey** died September 24, 2026, age 69, in Stratford, ON. MISt (U of T '01). She worked for various organizations including Bovar-Concord Environmental, Sound Ideas Sound Effects Library Richmond Hill, the Shaw Festival, the University of Waterloo and the Royal Conservatory of Music. She worked for the Stratford Festival until 2026.

**Audrey Litwin-Malloch** died July 18, 2026, age 72, in Toronto, ON. MLS. She joined the Toronto Catholic School Board as an elementary school librarian.

**Patricia Irene Lysyk** died July 6, 2026, age 89, in Vancouver, BC. MLS (UBC '81). She worked as a medical librarian at Woodward Library (UBC) and Eric Hamber Library (UBC/VGH) until retirement in 2001. She was a UBC Librarian Emerita.

**Iain David MacFarlane** died September 4, 2026, age 50, in Toronto, ON. MLIS (Western '04).

**Ronald Mackenzie** died April 4, 2026, age 91, in Victoria, BC. BLS (McGill '62), MLS (U of T '75). He worked at TPL, North York PL, Scarborough PL, Cape Breton Regional Library, Simcoe County (County Librarian), Georgian Bay Regional Library System (Regional Director). He was then assistant director, British Columbia Library Services Branch; Director, Northwest Territories Library Services Branch. He was an ELA member.

**Malcolm Douglas Peter Massie** died

May 21, 2026, age 79, in Newmarket, ON. MLS (Western ’72). He began his career as the Chief Librarian, Georgina Township PL.

**Danessa Joy Mathis (née Picklyk)** died July 19, 2026, age 51, in Minnetonka, MN. MLIS (McGill). Her librarian career took her to University of Lethbridge, Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, Neelin High School in Brandon and Smith Chason College in San Marcos, CA.

**Marion Ruth Matthews** died March 22, 2026, aged 79, in Portugal Cove-St. Philip’s, NL. MLS (Dalhousie ’74). She worked at the QEII Library at MUN.

**Helen Anne McDonald (née Bailey)** died April 26, 2026, age 96, in Windsor, ON. As a young librarian, she often read stories to the children where she worked.

**Jeffrey Charles Francis Mercer** died August 15, 2026, age 53, in New Brunswick, NB. MLIS (Dalhousie ’99). A librarian for 27 years, Jeff held the position of Colchester-East Hants PL executive director and Chief Librarian. He was NSLA president, 2024/25.

**Elizabeth Anne Millen (née Millar)** died August 19, 2026, age 75, in Halifax, NS. MLS (Dalhousie ’74). She was a PEI elementary school librarian for 10 years before returning to the Halifax area. She worked in elementary school libraries and later served as head librarian at Queen Elizabeth High School and Dartmouth PL.

**Stefanija (Stefanie) Antonija Pavlin (née Stukelj)** died August 4, 2026, age 97, in Toronto, ON. BLS (U of T ’54). She was head of library services at the Library and Information Centre, Ontario Ministry of Transportation and Communications, where she worked for 35 years. She was chapter president of the Special Libraries Association, Toronto, 1983.

**Carolyn Pawley (née Roberts)** died June 8, 2026, age 87, in Guelph, ON. BLS (U of T ’63). She began her career as a cataloguer at U of T, then next at U of Waterloo. She spent the rest of her career at U of Guelph, first cataloguing, then in humanities public service in the ’80s and briefly as personnel librarian, later becoming head of cataloguing in the early ’90s. She was OCULA president, 1990 to 91.

**Charles-Henri Pelletier** died January 26, 2026, age 84, in Lévis, QC. BA bibliothéconomie (U d’Ottawa ’67). He was head of acquisitions, Laval University Library, from 1973 and retired in 2001. He contributed to ***Choix et acquisitions de documents au Québec***.

**Althea Phillips** died April 20, 2026, age 96, in Simcoe, ON. She worked at Welland PL for many years, including as the technical services supervisor and film librarian.

**Sheila Rosemary Phipps (née Power)** died August 7, 2026, age 93, in London, ON. Trained as a librarian in England, she came to Canada and was appointed science librarian at Western in 1965.

**George M. Remedios** died June 13, 2026, age 79, in Toronto, ON. MLS (U of T ’74). He was a librarian at UNB, Fredericton. Returning to Toronto in the ’80s, he worked as librarian for the Toronto District School Board until retirement, 2003.

**Derek Vaughan Robertson** died June 1, 2026, age 90, in Kanata, ON. MLS (McGill ’78). He was a librarian at the Department of Secretary of State library for many years. He had been an ELA member.

**Douglas (Skippy) Robinson** died April 29, 2026, age 83, in Ottawa, ON. BLS (U of T ’67), MLS (U of T ’71). He worked at U of T and Trent U libraries, and National Library of Canada, 1981 to retirement in 2006. He had been an ELA member.

**Evelyn Margaret Ross** died April 10, 2026, age 99, in Calgary, AB. BLS (U of A ’70). She worked first at Edmonton PL, and then in Calgary for Sun Ergos, a performance partnership, and for several engineering and law firms.

**Harriet Schneider (née Garber)** died on March 21, 2026, age 90, in Ottawa, ON. BLS (McGill ’57). She was the volunteer librarian at Temple Israel 30+ years. She was a cataloguer at Algonquin College and Canadian Nurses Association.

**Urla Virginia "Ginny" Scott** died May 10, 2026, age 91, in Winnipeg, MB. She worked at Winnipeg PL during the ’60s. She was the legal librarian at Aikins, MacAulay & Thorvaldson (now MLT Aikins), 1977 to 1996.

**Connie Sebris-Upenieks** died April 5, 2026, age 84. She worked as a library technician for Humber College, retiring in 2006.

**Mary Jane Sinclair (née Tocher)** died May 30, 2026, age 77, in Ottawa, ON. MLS (U of T). She worked in New Brunswick for several years and then earned a legal degree at Western, resulting in a job placement in Ottawa where she researched briefs for the Supreme Court of Canada.

**Elizabeth Ann Stuart (née Green)** died May 30, 2026, age 84, in Regina, SK. Library Science (Hawaii). She was a maritime librarian for several years and, in 1982, she returned to Regina and worked at Regina PL.

**Ika (Edith) Subotic (née Milkovich)** died May 11, 2026, age 90, in Ontario. She was a librarian at the Metro Toronto Reference Library for 19 years and a Croatian elementary teacher for 18 years.

**Margery Doreen Sullivan** died June 30, 2026, age 99, in Vancouver, BC. BLS (McGill ’51). She was Vancouver PL science department head and finished her career as West Vancouver Memorial Library reference department head.

**Lawrence Francis Tapper** died August 7, 2026, age 74, in Ottawa, ON. An archivist at Public Archives of Canada for more than three decades, he pioneered the institution's collections of Jewish individuals and organizations, publishing *A Guide to Sources for the Study of Canadian Jewry*, 1978, and its revised version nine years later. *Biographical Dictionary of Canadian Jewry, 1909-1914: From the Canadian Jewish Times* was published in 1992.

**Jo Anne Tharalson (née Kingdom)** died April 25, 2026, age 86, in Vancouver, BC. MA Library Science (U of Denver). She worked in the Vancouver PL language and literature division from 1966 for many years.

**William “Bill” Tiffany** died July 4, 2026, age 82, in St John’s, NL. MLS (McGill ’77). He worked 20+ years at the Queen Elizabeth II Library, Memorial U. He was head of acquisitions and periodicals and active in various library associations, including NLLA president, 1994 to 1995.

**Karin Lara Valdmanis** died April 9, 2026, age 40, in Toronto, ON. MLIS (Western 2010). She volunteered at The Children's Book Bank, Toronto, before becoming a librarian at architectural firm IBI/Arcadis in 2012.

**Zora Anne Warwick (née Andjelic)** died May 28, 2026, age 72, in Calgary, AB. Dipl. Library Arts (SAIT ’76). She began her career as a U of Calgary library technician. Her career continued with several oil and pipeline companies in Calgary, eventually leading her into records management

consulting, where she concluded her working years.

**Barbara Ann Weatherhead** died March 29, 2026, age 96. BLS (U of T '69). During her long career as an Ontario provincial government librarian, she worked at the Department of Municipal Affairs Library, Community Planning Branch and the Treasury library. She was active in the SLA Toronto chapter and very active in the Ontario Government Libraries Council.

**Rhys Williams** died August 14, 2026, age 80, in Indian Head, SK. MLS (Western '79). He worked at the University of Calgary Library for more than 20 years.

**Mary Florence Betha Claire McEwen (Beth) Willoughby** died June 1, 2026, age 91, in Toronto, ON. BLS (U of T '61). She was director of the Etobicoke Public Libraries.

**Edna Wilson** died August 29, 2026, age 83, in Calgary, AB. She was on staff at the Engineering Library, University of Saskatchewan, 1971 to 2000.

**Antony Scott Woodward** died July 13, 2026, age 86, in Ottawa, ON. MLS (Western '73). He was a cataloguing librarian at the National Library of Canada.

**Frances Mary Woodward** died July 30, 2026, age 87. BLS (McGill '61). She worked at the BC Provincial Archives, Victoria, 1961 to 1966, and then in the UBC Library special collections division, until retirement in 2003.

**Ida Wyllie** died January 13, 2026, age 95, in Calgary, AB. BLS (U of T '51). She was a librarian in Calgary.

**Severino Ziorli** died August 1, 2026, in Guelph, ON. MLS (UBC '93). He worked for Toronto PL and the former North York PL for 39 years.

*Obituaries are brief, due to space constraints. You can access more detailed obituaries by visiting the online issue of ELAN and clicking on the name* ***(shown in green)****. The ELA website section,* ***"Remembering our Ex Libris Colleagues",*** *provides more information celebrating the lives of our members.*



## *Retirements*

Compiled by Suzette Giles

**Larry Alford**, University Chief Librarian, U of T, stepped back from his position on June 30, 2026 after 15 years leading UTL. **In a letter to faculty and staff** announcing he was not renewing his contract, it notes Alford's career of more than 46 years began at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, then a stint as Dean of University Libraries at Temple University, Philadelphia and then U of T in 2011. Active in many organizations, he has been on Ontario Council of University Libraries' council of directors since 2011; he is recognized for his leadership in expanding the **Borealis Dataverse** into a shared service supporting digital research across Canada and the transition of **Scholars Portal Journals** to the Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN). He has been on many boards: CARL 2018 to 20; ARL Board 2013 to 17 and president in 2016; Canadiana.org, a Canadian non-profit which provides digital access to Canadian heritage collections; CRKN, which licenses resources for libraries across Canada; and, the Center for Research Libraries in Chicago. He was recipient of the 2018 ALA Hugh Atkinson Memorial Award and the 2021 CARL Award for Distinguished Service to Research Librarianship. (For more, see Awards p. 27.) **Constantia Constantinou** assumed the role of University Chief Librarian on September 1, 2026. Larry is an ELA member.

**Jeff Barber**, Director and CEO of Regina PL, will retire in fall 2026. MLIS (Alberta '91), MBA (Royal Roads University '02). He joined Southeast Regional Library, SK, in 1991 and was Assistant Library Director/Systems Manager for more than nine years. He was then head of Access Services, U of S Library for nearly two years before joining Regina PL (RPL) as deputy director in 2003, becoming director and CEO in 2005. He led RPL at a time of fiscal challenges without eliminating services or closing branches; had a key role in the **mâmawêyatitân centre** (pronounced ma-ma-waya-ta-tan) development, a multi-use facility in Regina's North Central neighbourhood; and was instrumental in developing Saskatchewan's integrated library system that provides equitable access to library materials throughout the province. He was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award by the U of A Library and Information Studies Alumni Association (2017) and the **Ken Haycock Award for Promoting Librarianship**. He has been a prominent and active member of numerous library organizations, including IFLA, Saskatchewan Information and Library Services (SILS) Consortium, Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC/CBUC), CLA, OLA, SLA and ALA.

**Terri Beharriell**, CEO/Librarian, Huron Shores PL, ON, joined the library in January 1998 and retired in spring 2026. The new librarian is Todd Beharriell.

**Catherine Biss**, Markham PL, ON, retired June 30, 2026, after 31 years with the library and 24 years as CEO. Significant milestones include the opening of the Angus Glen, Cornell and Aaniin branches, as well as major renovations at Thornhill Community Centre and Markham Village. Other initiatives include the introduction of RFID technology, makerspaces and the implementation of MPL's unique C3 classification system for the non-fiction collection. Catherine was a founding member of the Centre for Equitable Library Access and the Canadian Urban Libraries Council. The new CEO is **Andrea Cecchetto.**

**Beth Davies**, Llibrarian, Burnaby PL, BC, retired March 2026. She joined the library, as CEO, in 2016 after more than 11 years with Vancouver PL, where she was the head of the Carnegie branch and then manager, Neighbourhood Services. LLB (University of Leicester, U.K.), MLIS (UBC '99). As an adjunct UBC faculty member, she developed and taught a graduate course in community-led librarianship, 2003 to 2016. The Burnaby Mayor noted "Beth has led Burnaby Public Library with care, professionalism and a deep commitment to public service. She has guided our library system through a period of growth, as both our city and our libraries have expanded to better serve Burnaby's diverse, multicultural population." **Jackie Flowers** is the new Chief Librarian.

**Sandra Morden**, Librarian, digital initiatives and open scholarship, Queen's University Library (QUL), ON, retired August 11, 2026. MLS (Western '85). She was at UTLAS International and DRA before becoming an independent

consultant on library systems for many years. In 2014, she joined QUL as head, Discovery and Technology Services (DTS) which evolved into DIOS. Sandra was instrumental in various initiatives that included the Ask Us Project, the Digital Humanities Pilot Project, the public and e-lab equipment and computing project, the Digital Collections Project and two full-scale web redesigns. From 2019 to 2023, Sandra served as acting associate university librarian, overseeing Discovery and Technology Services, Open Scholarship Services, and Information Services.

**Pilar Martinez**, CEO of Edmonton PL (EPL), AB, stepped down in August 2026 after 26 years of progressively responsible leadership, culminating in her appointment as CEO in 2015. MLIS (U of A), certified corporate director (ICD.D). Major milestones under her leadership include shaping EPL's brand, *We Share!* as part of her vision of a community-led service framework; the four-year, multimillion dollar revitalization of the **Stanley A. Milner Library**; 14 new branch openings and six renovations. EPL also introduced the Elder in Residence program, and oversaw the opening of **PÎYÊSÎW WÂSKÂHIKAN** (pronounced: **PEE-YE-SOU WAASK-A-HIGAN**) (Thunderbird House), the first dedicated Indigenous space for ceremony and gatherings. The many awards EPL received included becoming the first Canadian library to be named **Library of the Year** by Library Journal and Gale Cengage Learning Library of the Year in 2014. Martinez has been CLA and LAA president, chair of Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC) board of directors of the Urban Libraries Council, and OCLC Global Council, and IFLA North American Regional Division and METLIB member. She has been honoured with the 2012 **Ken Haycock Award for Promoting Librarianship**, the 2016 LAA President's Award, the 2018 Distinguished Alumni Award from the U of A Library and Information Studies Alumni Association, the 2023 Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal and the 2026 YWCA Edmonton Women of Distinction Trailblazer Award. **Sharon Day**, previously EPL's Executive Director, Customer Experience, is the new CEO, effective Aug. 17, 2026.

**Todd Mundle** retired on July 10, 2026, after more than 14 years as university librarian, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, BC. MLS (UBC '89). He worked at the University of Regina before joining Simon Fraser University (SFU) Library in 1995. He was at SFU for nearly 17 years where he held a number of positions before becoming associate university librarian in 2002. He joined KPU in 2002 in its early years as a university. Significant projects include the **Open Publishing Suite** which **won** the 2021 BCLA's Outstanding Contribution Award, a variety of Indigenous initiatives including the **χʷəχʷéýəm** (the closest English phonetic pronunciation is hwhwuh-AY-yumoral) storytelling collection, an Indigenous-focused library space and resource collection and working on identifying Indigenous authors and updating language around subject headings. Todd was Content Strategy Committee Canadian Research Knowledge Network chair, 2013 to 2020, and BCLA president, 2021 to 2023. In 2026, he was awarded a BCLA **Honourary Life Membership**. **Dr. Christina Neigel** is KPU's new university librarian.

**Tina Nielsen** retired from Bowen Island PL (BIPL), BC, June 1, 2026, after more than 31 years as Chief Librarian. MLS (UBC). Tina was Children's Services librarian at North Vancouver District PL for a short time before joining BIPL in 1995. When she joined BIPL it consisted of one dark room with two staff and now is a 4,000 sq ft community centre with seven staff, updated technology and innovative programs. **Jennifer Streckmann** is the new Chief Librarian.

**Maureen Sawa**, CEO of the Greater Victoria PL (GVPL), BC, for 15 years, retired in September 2026. During her time, GVPL introduced community-inspired programs and new technologies, eliminated overdue fines and had one of the highest circulation rates per capita nationally. An Emerging Local Authors Collection was also introduced to showcase 1,600 titles by more than 1,200 local authors and illustrators. She is a past chair of the Canadian Urban Libraries Council and the Association of B.C. Public Library Directors and an Ottawa Declaration Working Group founding member. Maureen joined GVPL in 2010, after eight years at Hamilton PL as Director, Public Service and Community Development. Earlier in her career, Maureen was the author of two children's books, including **The Library Book: The Story of Libraries from Camels to Computers** and was a Canadian Association of Children's Librarians president. **Stephanie Hall** (ELA honorary member) became chief executive officer and Chief Librarian in September 2026.

**Katherine Watmough**, associate librarian and borrower services librarian, Thompson Rivers University (TRU), BC, retired April 30, 2026. MLIS (Western '12). Prior to joining TRU in 2014, she was at the College of New Caledonia library and UNBC library. Katherine served as liaison librarian to a broad range of academic areas throughout her career at TRU. She facilitated and presented at provincial, national and international library conferences. She also helped develop SAILS, the Symposium for All Interior Library Staff, a public library collaboration conference serving the Thompson-Nicola region.

**Peter Webster**, after a distinguished 32-year career at Saint Mary's University Library (SMUL), retired in 2026. He joined SMUL in 1993 as information technology services librarian and later served as associate university librarian, 2010 to 2023, as well as acting university librarian during key transition periods. The **APLA Bulletin** noted "Peter has served in management and project leadership roles within NOVANET (the Nova Scotia academic library consortium), the Council of Atlantic Academic Libraries (CAAL-CBPA), the National Library of Canada, CRKN, Statistics Canada's data liberation initiative, and the Digital Research Alliance of Canada. He was the recipient of the Atlantic Provinces Library Association (APLA) Merit Award in 2010. With 35 published journal articles, book chapters and other works, Peter's impact has reached professionals, students and academics around the world." At the May 2026 SMU convocation, Peter was conferred with the title of librarian emeritus in recognition of his significant contribution to the library and SMU, the first librarian so honoured. Peter is an ELA member and will report on Atlantic News for *ELAN* starting in the Spring 2027 issue.

***Suzette Giles** held a number of different positions at Ryerson University Library 1975 to 2010 and was the data librarian at retirement.*

## Support ELA's Indigenous Student Bursary

ELA provides a $2,500 bursary annually to an Indigenous student in a Canadian library/information or archival studies program. The bursary is managed by Indspire and funded by generous donations from ELA members and others in the wider library community, with an annual sponsorship from Library Bound.

For further information on the bursary, visit our **website**.

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